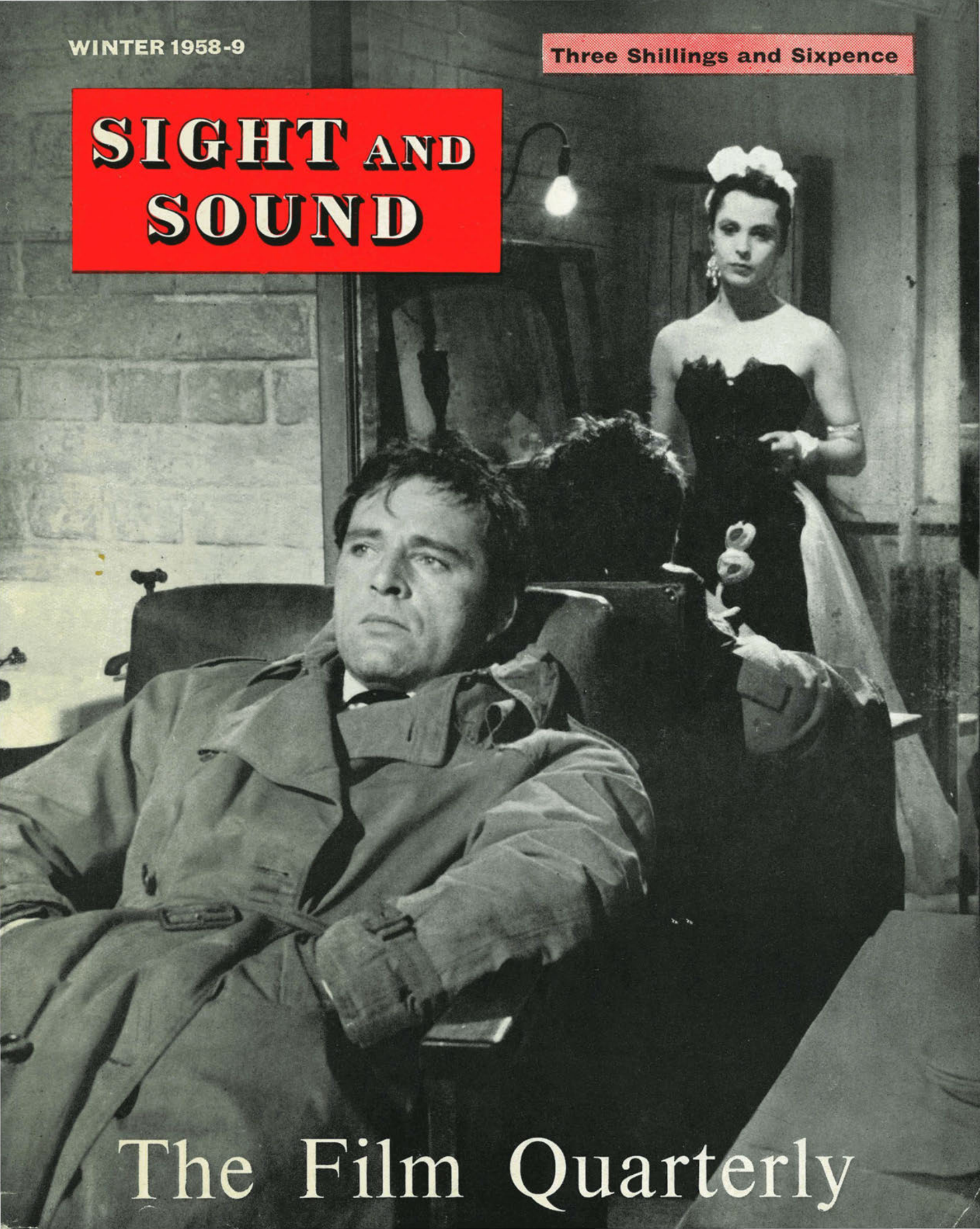


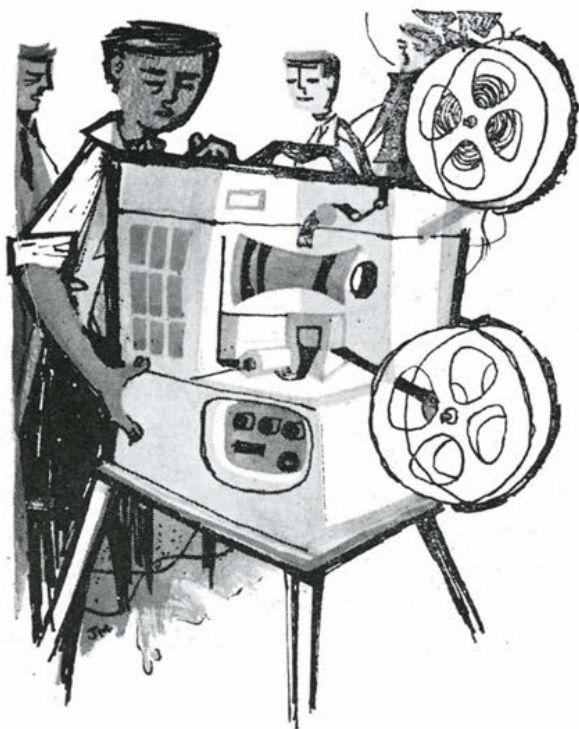
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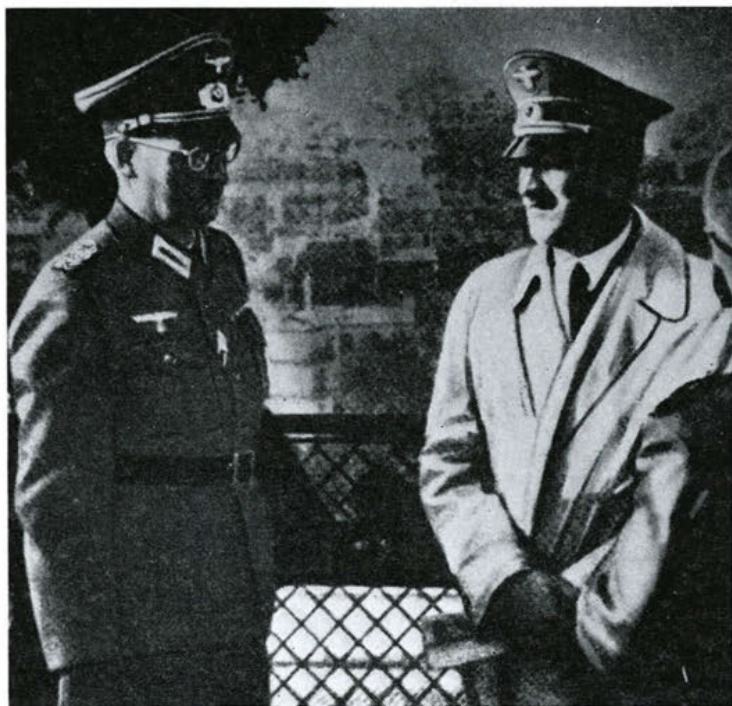


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SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

VOLUME 28 No. 1 WINTER 1958/59

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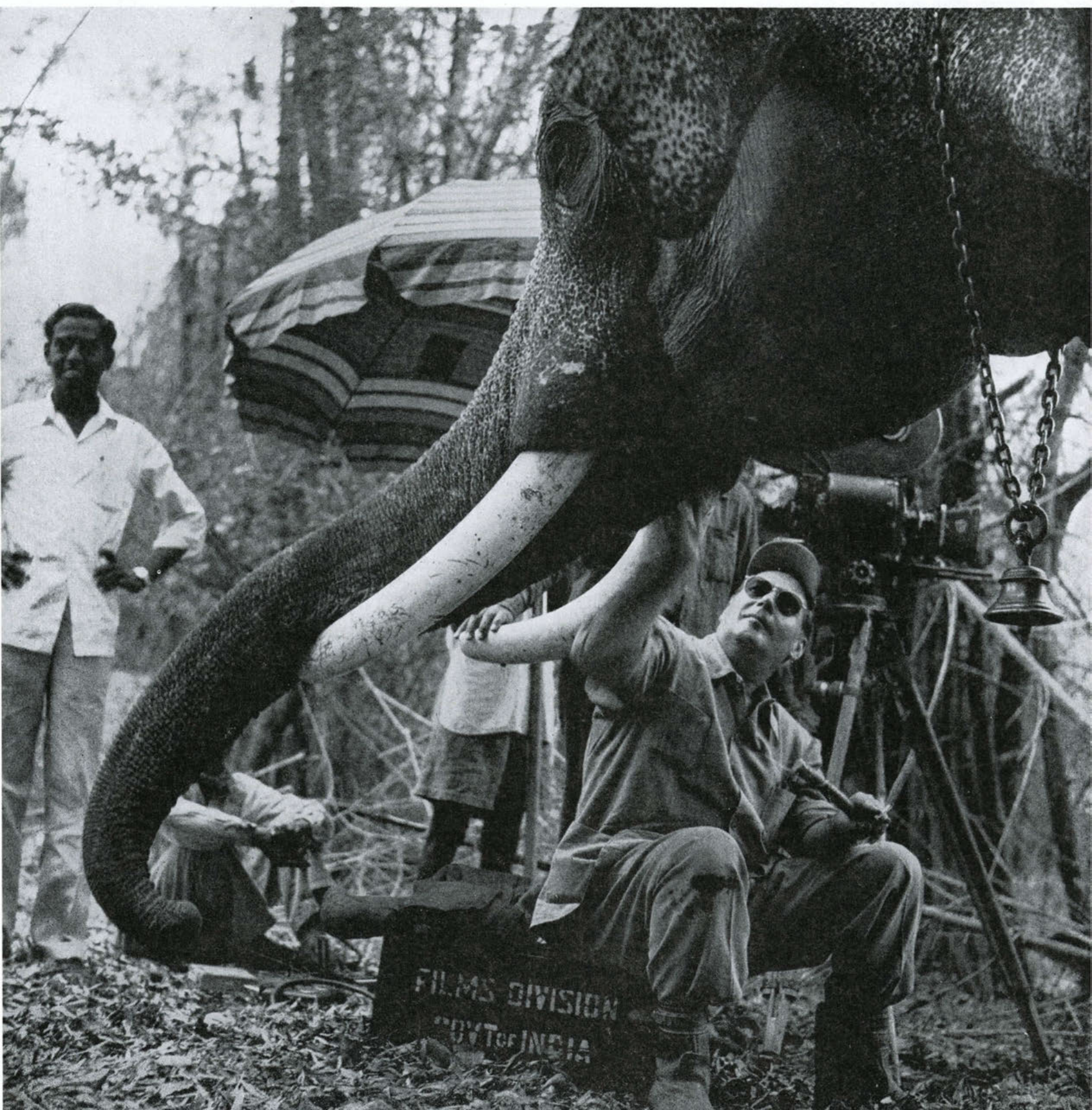
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Roberto Rossellini on location in India during the filming of "India 58".



THE FRONT PAGE

H ORROR FILMS . . . WAR FILMS . . . nudist films; the sudden upsurge of interest all over the world in the work of Ingmar Bergman; the first showings of Part Two of Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*; the relative eclipse of the Italian cinema and the vitality of young directors in France and Poland; this, sketchily, has been the cinema of 1958.

The shadow over the industry in Britain has been the declining audience; and the increase in the number of really shoddy productions (mainly importations, though sometimes homegrown) marks a fairly desperate attempt to cling on to the elusive public. But the real solution of course can only be a long-term one, and the major regrouping and reorganisation plans announced by the Rank Organisation point towards the changed pattern of distribution and exhibition that is bound to come. Meanwhile, in 1958, we have suffered some short-term consequences of the cinema's crisis: twenty-year-old American nudist camp stories are dragged to light and run for months in the West End; continental importations lean increasingly heavily on the "X" certificate; *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* maraud in every kind of disguise. This vulgarisation may concern only a relatively small section of the industry, but it has advanced more rapidly than anyone might have expected even a year or two ago. And it can do the cinema as a whole nothing but damage.

In a non-vintage year, it is worth recording some of the missing names. Nothing from Clair, Renoir, Bresson; nothing from de Sica, Antonioni, Castellani; nothing from Dassin, from Mackendrick, from Lean, from Kazan. . . . The list could be extended. Meanwhile there is Ingmar Bergman; and unquestionably 1958 has been Bergman's year. In London we have seen *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*; in Paris a Bergman retrospective season roused the French critics to frantic adulation; in the Argentine a new magazine devotes its entire first issue to his work. His talent is one that it is impossible to disregard and difficult to like. Religious symbols, psychological symbols, trust in innocence, fascinated preoccupation with pain and evil are the marks of his work. Each film becomes a battleground, in which issues clear to the director are revealed only by flashes to the audience. All the same, here is a very substantial talent, very much of its time.

Of the year's other notable films, several (Wajda's *Kanal*, Ray's *Aparajito*) had already been seen in the 1957 London Festival. The Russian *Cranes are Flying* has an extraordinary new actress in Tatiana Samoilova and is made with a driving confidence that even gives validity to its clichés. We have seen, somewhat belatedly, the Finnish war film *Unknown Soldier* and Becker's amusing *Arsène Lupin*; the Soviet *Don Quixote* and *Quiet Flows the Don*; Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria* and Visconti's *Notti Bianche*. Few masterpieces here, and these films apart the continental quota has mainly been filled with violence and sex.

From America, a stream of heavyweight adaptations—*The Brothers Karamazov*, *Peyton Place*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *South Pacific*, *The Young Lions*—disappointments from Hitchcock (*Vertigo*) and Chayefsky (*The Goddess*), and a half-success (*The Defiant Ones*) from Kramer. The most

outlandish American picture of the year, Orson Welles' *Touch of Evil*, is more of a film than any of these: even when he can create only a world of shadows, Welles still somehow imposes himself. It is evidence of how rapidly things now change in the cinema that the movement we were discovering only a year ago is already a spent force: not a single major film in 1958 followed in the line of pictures like *Bachelor Party* and *Twelve Angry Men*. It's also revealing that the Western, supposedly threatened by TV's ceaseless stream of canned horse operas, apparently survives triumphant and unscathed. Of the American pictures released here during the first eleven months of 1958, just on one in four were Westerns.

In Britain, war subjects account for about one film in every eight produced—*Dunkirk*, *The Key*, *Orders to Kill*, *Ice Cold in Alex* and the rest. It is a high percentage, and likely to remain high as long as war still draws the public. Of these, *The Key* and *Orders to Kill* are the most ambitious; and in another style one remembers Donen's attractively nostalgic comedy *Indiscreet*. Another note for researchers into the cinema of 1958: the employment of German stars on five major British productions, making a significant tribute to the current importance of the West German market.

The National Film Theatre initiated some of the major excitements of 1958. The Second Part of *Ivan the Terrible*, never seen outside Russia until its Brussels Exhibition showing, was immensely rich and rewarding; and it will probably reach the public cinemas in 1959. Another Eisenstein discovery is the unedited material from *Que Viva Mexico!* In November, the cinema was packed for Jay Leyda's two-and-a-half hour screening of some of this material—silent, unedited rushes, a unique screen equivalent to the artist's sketches or the writer's notebook. At the Film Theatre also we saw the outstanding factual documentary shown during the year, Carlos Velo's bullfighting study *Torero*, as well as some work of the young Polish documentarists, the "black" investigations and the imaginative explorations such as *Two Men and a Wardrobe*. Equally innovative are Claude Chabrol's *Le Beau Serge*, probably the finest work to date of the young renaissance in the French cinema, and Richard Williams' cartoon of ideas *The Little Island*, another film which is to receive wider commercial distribution.

An uneven year, then. The London Festival, reported elsewhere in this issue, assembled a good contemporary assortment; but people returning from continental festivals, from Cannes and Berlin and Venice, mostly recorded a sense of disappointment. Films by established talents rather betrayed expectations; discoveries were harder to make. This is not really surprising. The only danger for the cinema is that the climate of disillusionment may spread. Jean Renoir, in an interview printed in this issue, records a kind of personal dissatisfaction, a veteran's mistrust of a craft that now seems too easy; younger talents may retreat before problems of finance and distribution that are certainly becoming no easier. But still, and encouragingly, there are always discoveries—and rediscoveries.



Spencer Tracy, as the ageing political boss, and Jeffrey Hunter in John Ford's "The Last Hurrah".

In the Picture

Propaganda

SOME OF THE cleverest screen propaganda produced anywhere in the world is currently coming from the DEFA Documentary Studios in East Germany, from the team of Andrew and Annelie Thorndike. Their feature *The German Story* was a highly skilful compilation on the history of Germany during this century. Their more recent and shorter films, *Holiday on Sylt* and *Operation Teutonic Sword*, are organised with exceptional ingenuity to bring together newsreel material, still photographs, documents, to present the screen equivalent of a hard-hitting news story. Both films are merciless in denunciation. *Holiday on Sylt* pursues the record of Herr Reinefarth, now mayor of a West German seaside town, as an S.S. officer. *Operation Teutonic Sword* explores the career of General Speidel, now commander of NATO's land forces. Both pictures—more notably *Operation Teutonic Sword*—support charges backed by documentation with vaguer allegations: the fact, for instance, that General Speidel served during the war on the Russian front does not justify the film in charging him with the savage tactics employed by the retreating German army. It is also alleged that General Speidel, then military attaché at the German embassy in Paris, was obscurely involved in the 1934 assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia. Here, as elsewhere, one would like to know just how reliable is the film's "documentary evidence".

The aim of the Thorndikes' series, *The Archives Testify*, is to delve into the records of ex-Nazis now in positions of authority in West Germany. Their films are made with passion and finesse. Last summer the Associated-Rediffusion programme *This Week* cancelled its intended showing of *Holiday on Sylt*, which has also been refused a certificate by the British Board of Film Censors. The ban has now been extended to *Operation Teutonic Sword*. The certificates were refused mainly on the grounds that the films made allegations against living individuals which they were given no opportunity to answer, and presented facts which were open to another interpretation than the one given. Mr. Trevelyan, secretary of the Board, does not regard the ban as inconsistent with his claim a few weeks ago that there is no political censorship of films in Britain. Meanwhile the West German propaganda film *Blitzkrieg*, criticised in some quarters for its whitewashing of the German soldier, has been running profitably at the Rialto. Here General Horrocks' introduction gives "the other point of view" a hearing.

United Nations

FROM THE SMALL but active United Nations Film Services comes a report of what is not only their biggest project to date, but on any terms an unusually ambitious documentary venture. The film is a full-length feature, *Power Among Men*, conceived and written by Thorold Dickinson (chief of the Film Services) and J. C. Sheers and directed by Gian Luigi Polidoro and Alexander Hammid, co-director also on Menotti's film of *The Medium*. Its theme is the capacity of the human race for survival, with an added warning that there may come a time when mankind is faced with a destruction so complete that no survival will be possible.

The theme is pursued through documentary episodes: the rebuilding of a village near Monte Cassino after the last war, the story of an agricultural co-operative in the hills of Haiti, the founding and growth of an international town serving the hydro-electric aluminium plant in British Columbia. The final sequence shows the work of the international atomic research station in Norway, the uses and abuses of atomic energy. Using colour for sequences of life today, the film reverts to black and white for its linking passages. An extract from a 1946 documentary on the Italian village, for instance, is followed by an Eastman Colour sequence of the same people, eleven years later and eleven years older, in their rebuilt homes. In essence, the film is designed as a record of achievement and hazard.

The music score of *Power Among Men* is by Virgil Thomson, the commentary for the American version is spoken by Marlon Brando. Language versions will be made according to demand; and the intention is to secure wide international distribution for this international undertaking.

Meeting with Harold Lloyd

MEL CALMAN writes: If the head waiter had not taken me over to Harold Lloyd's table I should not have recognised him. He was sitting with his wife eating a milk pudding. "It's some kind of whole-wheat. I thought I'd give it a try," he said. I looked closer at him and even though he wasn't wearing glasses I could see the buried image of the fresh-faced bespectacled youth who dangled from a skyscraper in *Safety Last*. We shook hands and I noticed his missing thumb and forefinger: the sad result of a comedy bomb that exploded prematurely.

Harold Lloyd never used stunt men—even after this accident. "We didn't have process shots in those, you know. Every shot was real. If I was hanging from the fifteenth floor, then I really was up there. All we did was build wooden platforms that jutted out beneath us. The camera shot down so that these weren't seen. But often the platforms were fifteen feet below me. I used to take three or four days to get acclimatised to the heights. We built that clock in *Safety Last* on the actual building. No, people didn't look up at us. They didn't see us or thought we were builders. My wife was Mildred Davis then and starring with me in that film. She was petrified of heights. That last scene at the top of the building—"get this over fast", she screamed.

"I always did the improbable but never the impossible. I never hit the pavement and bounced up again into a room. I aimed for reality. I was the first comic to be a guy you could believe in. I had that gimmick of the glasses, but that was all I needed. I didn't have funny clothes.

"We didn't use scripts. It was all off the cuff. In *Safety Last* we shot the heights sequence first, without knowing what the rest of the film would be like . . . we just knew he'd get into some kind

of trouble. I always used gag writers—anything from three to ten gagmen. They'd dig up bits of business and submit them to me. I'd judge if they fitted into the story. No, they weren't nuts—they were mostly college men, graduates, with fine erudite minds. I'd take an idea from one writer and give it to another and then pass it on to another until the original guy wouldn't recognise it—but it fitted in. They were paid good money. As much as 800 dollars a week, which was worth a lot more in those days.

"You know I might have been a 'Popcorn King'," he laughed. "When I was a kid, about twelve, I bought a lot of popcorn wholesale. Bought butter and roasted the stuff. Then sold it in small bags. I was making about 17 dollars a week. If I'd stayed with it I'd have been a 'Popcorn King' now. I don't regret it. Making films has been more fun.

"I got Harry Langdon to leave vaudeville and go into pictures. He went to Hal Roach and wanted 100 dollars more than Hal was willing to pay. It was silly of Hal. So Harry went to Sennett. But he used him wrong. I told him, 'Look here, Harry, he's working you too fast. Make him work you slow.' Harry went on to make his own pictures and made a lot of money. He had a great talent, but no judgment about himself. He was always a better comedian than his material."

I asked him if he was going to make a film of his life. "That's held up at present. They want me to approve only the screen treatment and not the actual shooting script. I know the difference a writer can make in the script. I want to O.K. the shooting script. After all it's my life and I've only got one. . . ."

Polish Notes

BOLESŁAW MICHAŁEK writes: The most important event of the Autumn film season in Poland has probably been Andrzej Wajda's new film, *The Ashes and the Diamond*. Based on a novel written just after the war by Jerzy Andrzejewski, its story is set in a small Polish town on the first day of peace. Two young men, members of an underground organisation which has been fighting both the Germans and the Communists, come to the town. They are ordered to kill a newly-arrived Communist party official. Maciek, the film's hero, has to face a decision: the war is over, his fellow-countryman does not seem an enemy—must he continue killing on this first day of peace? Finally he obeys the order; and, a moment later, dies himself, as tragically and needlessly as his victim.

The film is concerned to present the politically and psychologically complex situation in Poland immediately after the war. The dramatic theme is treated as a conflict between two people rather than between political doctrines; and Wajda has set two hostile viewpoints in opposition without seeming himself to formulate a



Andrzej Wajda's "The Ashes and the Diamond."

judgment. But in fact a judgment is given: *The Ashes and the Diamond*, despite its tragic conclusion, is an affirmatory film, a condemnation of bloodshed. Coming after *A Generation* and *Kanal*, it forms the third part of Wajda's trilogy dedicated to his own generation of Polish youth.

Wajda's passion for uncommonly dramatic, highly expressive and violent situations is given full rein in the film. (Some sequences, such as the hero's death on a rubbish dump, remind one of Buñuel.) Everything in the film is ardent, passionate, exclamatory, with visual images of great power and intensity. Zbigniew Cybulski, who plays the leading part, has responded splendidly to this violent style. His characterisation of the central figure, nervous, impulsive, slightly hysterical, and yet a man of great charm, is one of the best things in the Polish cinema.

Polish reactions to *The Ashes and the Diamond* have been rather curious. From two different quarters, Wajda is reproached for having presented the conflicts of 1945 in a slightly false light. One side protests against his rough treatment of the Communists and their motives, others criticise his presentation of the opposing faction. But no-one questions the fact that this is a remarkable film—perhaps Wajda's finest to date.

Work in Britain

JACK ARNOLD: *The Mouse that Roared*, story of a miniature European state which, for economic reasons, challenges the U.S.A. to a war—and wins. Peter Sellers and Jean Seberg star in this Open Road production for Columbia release.

LEWIS GILBERT: *Ferry to Hong Kong*. Internationally cast (Orson Welles, Curt Jurgens, Sylvia Syms), and adapted from a Far Eastern adventure novel by Simon Kent, this is the first of the Rank Organisation's £500,000 subjects.

J. LEE THOMPSON: *Tiger Bay*, a suspense drama set in Cardiff and dealing with the dilemma of a small girl who witnesses a murder and sides with the guilty man against the police. With Horst Buchholz, John Mills and Yvonne Mitchell; Independent Artists for Rank release.

CAROL REED: *Our Man in Havana*, an adaptation of Graham Greene's satirical novel about a vacuum cleaner salesman who finds himself involved in a hallucinatory relationship with the secret service. With Alec Guinness; for Columbia release.



Simone Signoret and Laurence Harvey in "Room at the Top," an adaptation of John Braine's novel directed by Jack Clayton.

THE FACE OF

HORROR

by DEREK HILL

Latest teenage idol showing at cinemas in Washington is an endearing character billed as "The Blob, a blood-bloated mass of man-eating slime." His supporting feature; "I married a monster from outer space—shuddering things from beyond the stars here to breed with human women!"—News item,

Daily Express

ONLY A SICK SOCIETY could bear the hoardings, let alone the films. Yet the displays, the posters and the slogans have become an accepted part of the West End scene. So, too, have the queues. The horror boom, despite occasional trade rumours, is still prospering. Why?

Scratch a psychiatrist and, it seems, you'll find a horror film advocate. Dr. Martin Grotjahn, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Southern California, is quoted

in *Films and Filming* under the headline 'Horror—Yes, It Can Do You Good': "There is, perhaps, a healthy function in horror. It keeps us on the task to face our anxieties and to work on them." And later, on the influence of horror on children: "It is a neurotic child, a frightened child, which takes horror from the screen and the book and worries about it in everyday life, and at night. Altogether it is a tendency of our time to be too concerned, to be too anxious to do it right. We are always in danger to feel like guilty parents who have failed their children. In other words, we are inclined to become over-protective."

An anonymous British psychiatrist declares in *Picturegoer*: "Horror films are a kind of dare to teenagers, a challenge that they just have to take up. And it provides a kind of outlet for them at a time—adolescence—when their feelings and their minds are occupied with sex and violence . . . I would say that this type of film was generally harmless. It

Above: "Dracula". Staking the vampire.

represents a kind of fairy-tale for adolescents that's far removed from real life."

Production companies and distributors have been equally prompt in finding psychiatrists to applaud the horror cult, and publicity departments have defensively dug up some unusually classy references. The following hand-out from Columbia for *The Revenge of Frankenstein* is typical: "Certain psychiatrists and anthropologists have long maintained that the emotional shock experienced by people reading thrillers, watching horror films, can have a salutary effect. In primitive cultures, monstrous, hideous masks were used in festivals, processions, etc.; in the ancient Greek drama, macabre events and visions were an essential ingredient; Aristotle asserted that the essential function of drama was to fill the audience with terror so as to purge their emotions. . . . And how about Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*?"

"Even today, in such places as exotic Bali, terrifying monsters and demons predominate in the people's festivals. . . . On every pleasure beach this summer, children are watching the traditional Punch and Judy show—which has a vicious crocodile that brings screams of fright and then squeals of delight, when Mr. Punch knocks it down to the depths again. . . . Everyone harbours a host of weird and wonderful images in the subconscious—images that intangibly take part in his or her private mental dreams of anxiety. Maybe the uncanny, intriguing power of horror films helps exorcise what William Blake called 'these spectres around us, night and day'."

Famous Monsters of Filmland puts the same argument in another way: "The day may not be so far distant when vitamins will be replaced by vita-monsters, anti-histamines by haunty-histamines, and the common aspirin by a chill-pill called GASpirin. Un-tranquillisers! Chilltowns instead of Miltowns. That emotional health and mental stability may be improved by subjecting oneself to safe shocks is the conclusion shared by a number of psychiatrists and anthropologists. . . ." Then come the usual references—Greek drama, the invaluable Aristotle, Shakespeare ("Shades of Shockspeare!") exclaims the magazine, pointing out that if he had lived today he would be writing Frankenstein screen-plays), Bali, Faust and Poe. *Famous Monsters*, incidentally, is in no doubt about the compulsion of horror: "Welcome monster lovers," says the editorial, "You're stuck! The stuff this magazine is printed on, which looks so much like ordinary black printer's ink, is actually glue. You cannot put this magazine down! Try as you may to struggle, it is impossible: like a zombie, you have no will of your own."

One of the more bizarre theories about the popularity of horror films has been quoted by John Trevelyan, secretary of the British Board of Film Censors: "It has been suggested to me that young people are unconsciously using these films as a sort of test of courage. Not having been in the last war, they wonder how they would stand up to another. This would seem to be one way they can expose themselves to fear and find out their reactions."

The one thing to be said for this, and for the beguiling rumour that Western governments are encouraging the production of these films in an attempt to blunt people's sensibilities sufficiently for them to face the horrors of atomic warfare, is that the contemporary scene is taken into account. No one has suggested that the individual's 'need' for horror recurs in regular cycles. At the moment, admittedly, the horror film seems always to have been around in some degree. But in 1952 Curtis Harrington wrote in *SIGHT AND SOUND*: "With the end of the war, the popularity of horror films

quickly diminished, so that since 1947 there have been few, if any, produced."

This lull lasted just long enough to give the horror film curiosity value for an enormous number of new young cinemagoers. Until recently, Frankenstein and Dracula were for them only people whom Abbott and Costello met. For older filmgoers, the names were undoubtedly nostalgic. They meant excitement, suspense and shock, all valid attributes of any entertainment or art. This double appeal probably brought in the crowds. What brought them back for more was the discovery that they were getting something quite new. Unlike wide screen novelties, the curiosity value of the new kind of horror film is not diminished after the first one has been seen. Just as with the nudist productions, there is always the chance, rapidly becoming a near certainty, that the next film will go further—a point carefully fostered by the publicity departments.

This aspect, I suspect, accounts for a majority of the queues. What it does not explain is the reaction of audiences to the films. "Whatever the psychologists may make of it, most of the Rialto's patrons had sparkling eyes and ready grins when they proclaimed that they just loved 'a scarey film'," reported *The Observer* after questioning people coming away from *The Fly*: and this is the general attitude. It is an unavoidable fact that audiences do laugh at the most repugnant details of the new horror films. As a release from suspense and nervous tension, this would hardly be disturbing; but it is often the same kind of laughter that accompanies a successful comedy sequence—laughter not to relieve tension, but to express amusement or satisfaction.

2

Dr. Frederic Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* is concerned primarily with the influence of horror comics on the child. But, quite apart from his unanswerable refutation of the justifications put up by the horror comic industry—defences which closely parallel the film industry's current arguments—his points are frequently exactly relevant to the current horror film cycle and the adult. "It has been claimed," he writes, "that if a child identifies himself with a violent character in a comic book it shows the individual child's psychological need to express his own aggression. But this reasoning is far too mechanical. Comic books are not a mirror of the individual child's mind; they are a mirror of the child's environment. They are a part of social reality. They not only have an effect, they also have a cause."

To attempt to understand the reasons for the immediate public response to horror films, it is worth looking briefly back at past cycles. Until the coming of sound, Germany dominated the horror field—a country suffering from post-war depression and the *malaise* of defeat. The first American cycle ran throughout the 'thirties—the depression years—but the films became less popular as the economy gained strength. By the time America entered the war, virtually no horror films were being made. In 1943 a new boom began; and then, after the war, there was another recession.

Horror literature, it has often been noted, becomes increasingly popular when a society is undergoing outward stress. The cinema, which provides a more accurate reflection of a nation's mood, confirms this. Kracauer has shown, in *From Caligari to Hitler*, how accurately the macabre German film reflected national uneasiness. Every horror film cycle has coincided with economic depression or war. Now we have the biggest, ugliest threat of them all, and a bigger, uglier horror boom than ever before.



This may seem a glib over-simplification. The Bomb has obviously not caused the horror glut. But its existence has fostered an atmosphere in which the horror film has been able to develop in disturbing directions and on an unprecedented scale. The final analysis will find us a nation, probably a world, of quiet, controlled, largely unconscious hysterics, driven to that condition by submerged impotence and fear. The links between insecurity, hidden hysteria, and the current appetite for aggressive violence are not going to be easily broken.

3

Most of the psychiatric, psychological and sociological explanations offered for the horror boom suggest that few of the films' defenders—or for that matter their critics—have seen many of the productions in the current cycle. Comparison of the new horror films with anything produced in the past shows that a fresh, profoundly disquieting element has been added to, and often substituted for, recognised ingredients of every previous boom in horror.

Films from past peak periods differed considerably in style. The German productions derived from legend, the supernatural and national mysticism. The first American cycle of Frankenstein and Dracula had strong literary origins and relied on stylised fantasy, with often remarkable qualities of atmosphere and suspense. The second cycle, coming at a time when the most inept productions of any genre were making substantial profits, resulted in a series of unimaginative rehashes of earlier themes.

The beginnings of the new boom can be found in the science fiction film of the early 'fifties. At first most of these concerned outward-bound rocket passengers, and any horror ingredients were disclosed *en route* or on arrival. Soon, though, the direction switched. The earth became subjected to attacks and visitations from outer space or beneath the sea (*War of the Worlds*, *The Thing*, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, *Them!*, etc.). Economically this was a wise move. It is obviously cheaper to build one monster than a series of planet landscapes and props. Many of the visitors proved unintentionally comic rather than grim. Audiences laughed, but kept going back for more.

It is impossible to pin-point precisely the beginning of the change. But as the monsters lost their initial novelty, the need for new sensationalism became recognised. Instead of using more imagination and invention in the presentation of the invaders, studios endeavoured to make each monster slimmer and more repellent than its predecessor. The power of suggestion, the greatest tool of the vintage horror film, was abandoned. Instead, the screen began to concentrate on revolting close-ups. The obligatory last-reel death of the monsters provided plenty of opportunities. It was discovered, too, that details of damage done to human victims could be shown without disturbing the censor.

Soon almost every science fiction production included a few deliberately nauseating details of physical mutilation, which a few years ago the director would more effectively have suggested beyond the frame's borders. And this became as true of British as of American productions. Even the competent and not unimaginative *Quatermass* films had their quota of closely observed melting heads and diseased flesh.

In 1953 only nine releases bore any relation to the horror film, and most of these were naive, innocuous science fiction productions. In 1954 there were twelve, in 1955 nine, and in 1956 nineteen. In 1957, the year in which *The Curse of*

Styles in monsters. Above: invader from outer space in the Japanese "Mysterious Satellite". Centre: the hazards of fallout: a monstrous consequence of nuclear disaster in "The Day the World Ended". Below: cabbage-like visitors from space in "Invasion of the Hell Creatures".

Frankenstein firmly established the trend, there were thirty-five, and a further thirty were released during the first ten months of 1958. Very few of these have the innocence of the films of five years ago. It is interesting to compare these figures with the number of films which fell into the "H" category during the horror boom of the 'thirties: 1933, five films; 1934, five films; 1935, six films; 1936, two films; 1937, one film; 1938, one film; 1939, eleven films. Between June, 1942, and November, 1945, the B.B.F.C. banned the import of all "H" films. The accumulation during this second peak period totalled twenty-three.

Hammer Films' revival of the Frankenstein legend was marked by a total disregard for the qualities of the original James Whale films of the 'thirties. Instead of attempting mood, tension or shock, the new Frankenstein productions rely almost entirely on a percentage of shots of repugnant clinical detail. There is little to frighten in *The Curse of Frankenstein* or *The Revenge of Frankenstein*, but plenty to disgust. "Horror", in fact, is the wrong term for the majority of films that Hammer's successes have inspired. Most are so ineptly written and directed that every chance of genuine suspense is botched in a way that suggests ignorance of cinematic possibilities. In *The Revenge of Frankenstein*, for example, an unknown intruder sits in the shadows of the Doctor's room. There is no build-up, suspense or climax. Fumbling cross-cutting introduces the stranger's presence quite casually, and only the Doctor is startled when he speaks. Among high spots of the same film, marked by audience laughter and, in the case of the midnight premiere audience, occasional applause, are an end-on view of an amputated arm, the transference of a living brain from one body to another, and a smouldering human foot fallen from an oven in which the rest of the body has been burned.

Details immediately reminiscent of concentration camp atrocities are common. *Blood of the Vampire* shows chained humans suffering laboratory experiments. Lunatic asylums, where patients are tortured or flogged, are favourite settings (*Blood of the Vampire*, *Grip of the Strangler*). But the main obsession is a clinical one. The amputated limbs and floating eyeballs of the British Frankenstein films have led to the detailed surgical operations of the American *Frankenstein* 1970, the crawling brains and spines of *Fiend Without a Face*, the human head torn from its body in *The Trollenberg Terror*. The imaginative treatment of physical horror is one thing; but most of these new films merely attempt to outdo each other in the flat presentation of revolting details which are clearly regarded as their principal box-office assets. *The Fly*, which was genuinely intriguing for its first reel or two, contrived to repeat its sequence of a living body being crushed in a hydraulic press by opening with it and then building up to it again in flashback. The first time blood was shown streaming down the sides of the press; the second time we saw the writhing body as the press actually descended on to it. The reluctant last second cut to the victim's wife seemed more the result of practical difficulties in showing the actual crushing than any regard for the feelings of the audience.

These sequences apart, the films have little *raison d'être*. Nothing could be duller, for instance, than the "plot" sequences which bridge the sensational sections of the Frankenstein films. The only other element which most of the films can boast is an obsessive concentration on violence. The savage beating-up followed by the close-up strangling in *The Revenge of Frankenstein* is typical.

I concentrate on the Hammer productions because the extraordinary success of *The Curse of Frankenstein* has undoubtedly encouraged other companies to follow the same pattern. Hammer, incidentally, make three versions of all their horror films—the mildest for Britain, a stronger version for America, and the strongest of all for Japan. In the version of *Dracula* distributed in Japan, I understand that the principal addition was a series of long-held close-ups of the



Tree swallows woman: a scene from the recent British horror film "Woman-eater".

stake being hammered into the vampire's heart.

Playing simultaneously in two Tokyo theatres, *Dracula* broke both house records. In Britain it has set new house records in many Rank circuit cinemas. *The Curse of Frankenstein* took over £300,000 in Britain, £500,000 in Japan, and more than £1,000,000 in America.

The success of British horror films has had some curious incidental results. Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee have now, apparently, joined Alec Guinness to become the only three British stars whose names attract American cinema-goers. Lee, who played Count Dracula and also the monster in *The Curse of Frankenstein*, receives an enormous fan-mail, much of it said to be remarkably romantic in tone.

Both *Films and Filming* and *Picturegoer* have recently brought out horror issues. The latter featured a short story by Jimmy Sangster (writer of many of the British horror scripts) which concerned a woman who had eaten her male companions after preventing their escape by amputating their feet. A publicity representative of Universal-International recently told me, with some pride, "We were the first to use a blood-dripping machine in a foyer display. We spent £200 experimenting before we found a satisfactory way of pumping blood up through the model's feet so that it dripped convincingly from her neck. We used it for *Dracula*, and everybody's copied it since. But we were the first."

All these developments are a long way from the Punch-and-Judy, fairy tale and therapy through fear defences. Nor is much good done by such modishly gay dismissals as that typified in a recent letter from Beverly Nichols to the *New Statesman*; "When I see a beetle the size of a bison inserting its plastic claws into the buttocks of some tedious Hollywood blonde, I heave a sigh of delight because this is just what I have been wanting to do for years and years. . . ." With the kind of film that now confronts us, such a comment becomes irrelevant as well as irresponsible.

4

Recognising the clinical cult and tracing its origins is not difficult. The gap between the mutilation of monsters and the mutilation of men has been surprisingly quickly bridged, but it was never large. What is more to the point is the question of the new horror films' influence. Is this merely an unpleasant phase? Or are these films seriously capable of damage?

Again almost all the assurances so far produced answer the wrong questions. Christopher Lee, quoted in *Picturegoer*, summed up the most popular of the defensive arguments: "A couple of realistic films such as *On the Waterfront* and *Blackboard Jungle* can do more to incite hooliganism than a dozen horror films." Immediate incitement to violence may be rare; and it is true that any adolescent anxious to imitate a screen hero would find the majority of monsters frustrating models. But the harmfulness of these films is not to be judged by isolated incidents which they may have directly inspired, nor by the alarming parade of the perverted and the cranky which Associated-Rediffusion's *This Week* discovered in the queues and foyers. The real test is their influence on public taste, and their long-range effect on public mentality. And this is where the new viciousness must be utterly condemned: during the past five years, there has been a steadily accelerating corruption of the public's appetite.

In *Seduction of the Innocent*, Dr. Wertham recalls a strikingly relevant conversation: "A ten-year-old girl from a cultivated and literate home asked me why I thought it was harmful to read *Wonder Woman* (a horror comic). . . . 'Supposing,' I told her, 'you get used to eating sandwiches made with very strong seasonings, with onions and peppers and highly spiced mustard. You will lose your taste for simple bread and butter and for finer food. The same is true of reading strong comic books. If later on you want to read a good novel it may describe how a young boy and girl sit together and watch the rain falling. They talk about themselves and the pages of the book describe what their innermost little thoughts are. This is what is called literature. But you will never be able to appreciate that if in comic-book fashion you expect that at any minute someone will appear and pitch both of them out of the window.' In this case the girl understood, and the advice worked."

Perhaps adult cinemagoers should be more resistant than children. But the corruption of taste is, after all, a pretty insidious business. Given the Bomb, given the insecurity, producers have relentlessly used the fallacious old argument about giving the public what it wants. (And, inevitably, the bigger and more reputable companies, who at first held aloof, are finding it difficult to resist when they see the profits made by the smaller concerns.) Cinemagoers' appetites harden on what they are fed. The new horror gimmick is repulsive physical detail: so the next horror film, if it is to compete with the last, must always be that much bloodier, that much closer in its concentration on nauseating matter. Some producers have been happy to follow this trail; and



"The new gimmick is repulsive physical detail . . ." Attack by a disembodied brain in "The Fiend Without a Face".

no "give them what they want" formula can excuse their irresponsibility. This wasn't what anyone wanted—until they were given it.

Nor was this what anyone would have laughed at until they were trained to do so. The first science fiction monsters were undoubtedly funny. Their destruction by flame-thrower or disintegrator was less amusing, but the switch often passed unnoticed. Laughing at a monster being burned alive or jabbed in the eye was still considered a healthy reaction to impossible fantasy; but when the dismembering of humans brought the same laughs, the joke, it should have been realised, was over. Even now critics who ought to know better treat the genre light-heartedly. Paul Dehn gleefully lists the number of lopped-off limbs in the latest Hammer production, insisting that there is nothing to offend because the film is not realistic in setting or mood. But, whatever the background, surgery and slaughter-house details don't easily lose their vividness; nor, when exploited for their own sake, can they be anything but disgusting. It was notable that the only Hammer film which purported to use similar ingredients for a purpose—*Camp on Blood Island*—was infinitely more acceptable, despite its suspect motives.

Already, this new viciousness has invaded other spheres. *The Fiend Who Walked the West* was adopted as a title at the last minute for a film previously known as *The Hell-Bent Kid*. It was astutely billed as the first horror Western by someone who recognised that it shared the same sadistic love of violent detail as the other "horror" films. Even a recent revival of *Battleship Potemkin* was advertised as "the bloodiest massacre on record."

All the obvious horror films have received "X" certificates. *The Vikings*, with moments to equal many of these productions, mysteriously got an "A". Its boisterous air presumably led the B.B.F.C. to accept it as a harmless adventure story. I gather that it was trimmed a little before the "A" certificate was granted, but its highlights still included the tearing out of



"Obsessive concentration on violence . . ." A strangling sequence in "The Revenge of Frankenstein".

Kirk Douglas's eye by a falcon, the amputation of Tony Curtis's hand, Curtis being eaten alive by crabs, and a sequence in which Douglas, about to rape Janet Leigh, pleads, "Go on, scratch me, bite me, fight me." The first two incidents, at least, were treated in a way typical of the new horror cycle.

As far as censorship goes, it is an open secret that any producer anxious to get a script okayed which contains, say, eight dubious sequences will add three or four more before submitting it to the Board. Then, when the protests begin, he will politely concede the sequences he has added. (It is not rare, I understand, to end up one or two sequences to the good.) The censorship of completed horror films has clearly become a matter of frame snipping, computing the blood as if it were cleavage. The basic intentions of a film, or even of a sequence, scarcely seem to enter into consideration. The corruption of taste has as yet produced no public comment or reaction from the Board's representatives; and there is little point in counting on censorship to check the downward trend. Any attempt to tighten control here would probably do more harm than good.

The public temper, allied to the irresponsibility of some producers, distributors and critics, hardly tempts one to forecast either the end of the horror cycle or the limits it will reach. At present there are about twenty new horror films in production in this country and America.

One logical extension of the surgical obsession of these films is already with us—the hospital drama featuring lengthy operation close-ups. "I'm glad to hear," wrote Josh Billings in *Kine Weekly*, "that the stark operation sequences of *Behind the Mask* . . . have been toned down. The exploitation of the human 'interior' should be left to the horrific boys and other purveyors of offal." *Emergency Ward Ten*, produced by Ted Lloyd (*The Giant Behemoth*), directed by Robert Day (*Grip of the Strangler*) for Eros (*Jack the Ripper*) will include two heart operations, the second lasting ten minutes. The exhibitor who was attacked for billing *The Birth of a Baby* with two new horror films and calling it an all-horror programme was more perceptive than his critics realised.

5

It is a generally accepted, but untrue, theory that a society gets the films it deserves. The end of the clinical cult, how-

ever, must depend on cinemagoers themselves. This might sound a trite and woolly conclusion, if there were not already signs that attempts have been made to debase standards more quickly than a substantial proportion of the public will allow. John Davis, managing director of the Rank Organisation, states that an analysis of "thousands of letters" received shows that more than ninety per cent of the correspondents are disturbed about current horror and sex trends. The British Film Producers Association, at Mr. Davis's request, added the subject of horror films to their next council meeting, which was subsequently postponed. The Federation of British Film Makers, according to *Kine Weekly*, "has had the question of the problems created by over-exploitation of the horror theme under consideration for some time . . ."

The joint censorship committee of the poster advertising industry has recently declared that unless showmen ban the more vicious horror posters themselves, the committee will enforce its own ban. Any drop in revenue, they state, "will be more than offset by the knowledge that the evil influence of such posters will be withheld from the eyes of impressionable youth." The film industry's own concern with this problem is shown by the setting up of a special committee to exercise control over sensational poster advertising.

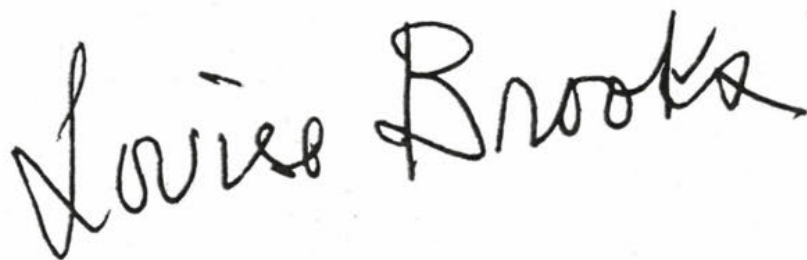
Receipts of the latest horror films have apparently provided some surprises. *Blood of the Vampire*, said to have been scheduled for a six-week run at the London Pavilion, was taken off after four weeks. *The Revenge of Frankenstein's* takings fell far below those of its predecessor. When the novelty of a horror picture is publicised, however, the takings can still be huge. *The Fly*, which cost only £155,000, grossed more than £1,000,000 in America and Canada; and at the Rialto it took £100 a day more than any previous Fox film shown at the cinema, including such box-office successes as *Carmen Jones*, *The Seven-Year Itch* and *Anastasia*.

With profits like these to be made from comparatively inexpensive productions, it is pointless to expect the sections of the industry concerned to make more than a show of self-control. Outside control of any kind could be not merely undesirable but dangerous. No matter how you look at it, the answer, every time, is in the hands of the same people who are being conditioned to accept the worst that the industry has ever offered.

From the innocuous science fiction monster to the clinical cult. Street displays in London (left) and New York.







GISH and GARBO

the executive
war on stars

Hollywood and its stars are used to being written about, but it is not often that the stars themselves are prepared to discuss frankly the cinema as they see it. We here publish an extract from a book Louise Brooks is at present writing—"Women in Films"—which promises to be a unique, intensely individual record of Hollywood thirty years ago.

Many of the films of Louise Brooks have disappeared from the screen, and Miss Brooks herself has been called the 'lost star' of the 'twenties. After beginning her career as a dancer with Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn at the age of fifteen, she was working for Ziegfeld when she was signed up by Hollywood and within a few years was a top star. She made two films with Pabst, "Pandora's Box" and "Diary of a Lost Girl," and among her other notable pictures were Howard Hawks' "A Girl in Every Port," Genina's "Prix de Beauté," and "The Canary Murder Case." Meanwhile Louise Brooks herself has never been forgotten; and in Paris she has recently been attending a special series of her films mounted by the Cinémathèque Française.

THERE WAS A TIME when I began work on this book [*Women in Films*] that I had a great deal to say about the failure of the most powerful stars in maintaining the qualities of their uniqueness which had first made them the idols of the public. I found a great deal to condemn in their lack of judgment in accepting poor pictures. In the spring of 1958, looking at Lillian Gish in *One Romantic Night (The Swan)*, I could not understand how she could have gone back to Hollywood in 1929 to play that ghostly part in that foolish picture made where, two years before, her spirit had gone forever—"forgotten by the place where it grew."

But now, after deeper penetration into the picture executives' aims and methods, I can only wonder and rejoice at the power of personality, intellect and will

that kept Lillian Gish a star for fifteen years. I can only be endlessly grateful that she was able to make so many marvellous pictures before the producers found the trick of curbing the stars and standardising their product according to their will and personal taste.

And it was never their will, but the public's which made them exploiters of great personalities and builders of enduring stars. It was never their taste, but that of certain writers and directors by which their product sometimes lost its passing value as entertainment and gained the enduring value of art.

All the jumbled pieces of the picture puzzle began to fall in place one day while I was thinking about one of Hollywood's foremost producers of the 1950's, whom I used to know in New York when he worked in a department store. For that led me to the realisation that as an actress I had been treated exactly as later I was treated as a salesgirl at the New York department store where I was accepted for work in 1946. They preferred young girls (I was 39) but otherwise I fitted nicely within the store's policy. I got \$30 a week. I was inexperienced and would not make too many sales. I would not stay too long. A few girls of exceptional ability there were who were allowed to stay, to build a following and collect a small percentage of their sales. But beyond this limited permission it was impossible for the selling of the merchandise ever to become dependent on the salesgirls. The customers were drawn by the name of the store and the merchandise. A great lot of dresses with mass appeal would be advertised with attractive snobbery in all the Sunday papers. On Monday they would sell themselves. At the end of the season, to clear the way for the new merchandise, old stuff was either reduced in price or sold as waste to anyone who could use it.

From this viewpoint, the successful leap of so many from the garment industry in New York to the picture



1927: Lillian Gish in Sjöström's "The Wind".

industry in Hollywood was no longer remarkable. Except geographically, it never took place. The men from the garment district simply went on to run the studios, the theatres and the exchanges just as they had run the dress factories, the whole-sale houses and the department stores. They used the writers, directors and actors just as they had used the dress designers, tailors and sales people. And was it not reasonable to continue to love and exploit only what they possessed—their names, their business and their product? What was more natural than to despise the old pictures that depressed the market? What was more sensible than ridding themselves of all but the negatives they were forced by law to keep in order to prove their property rights?

Old pictures were bad pictures. Pictures were better than ever. An actor was only as good as his last picture. These three articles of faith were laid down by the producers and business conducted in a manner to prove them.

As far as the public was concerned, it was an expensive grind of years—teaching it to sneer at old pictures. People were accustomed to seeing the same things over and over and loving them more and more—the same minstrel shows and vaudeville acts, the same Sothorn and Marlowe in *The Merchant of Venice*. Why not the same Lon Chaney in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*? the same Negri in *Passion*? As late as 1930, *Photoplay* magazine reported: "There was a deluge of 'what-has-become-of's' this month. Fans would like to see some of the silent favourites—both stars and pictures—brought back."

But Hollywood feared and believed at once and without question. Even Charlie Chaplin believed, he whose supreme success depended chiefly on the continued showing of his old pictures. Among all the creative minds of the picture business. D. W. Griffith, alone, knew the lie. "The public isn't fickle about its stars," he said in 1926. "Stars do not

slip quickly despite the theory to the contrary. You hear that so-and-so will die if he doesn't get a good picture immediately. Consider how many weak pictures have been made by big favourites—who are still favourites."

But who cared what Griffith said? Like his plot of sin and punishment and violent sexual pleasure, he was dead. Late at night in the New York Paramount studio, I used to see him patrolling the dark sets of *The Sorrows of Satan*, like a man cut from a 1910 catalogue of Gentlemen's Apparel.

2

1925 was the year when two things happened which finally bound the producers together in a concerted war on the Star System. It was the terrible year when "the spoiled child of industry" suddenly found itself in subjection to Wall Street. Modestly declaring a hands-off policy, the bankers had been financing the producers in their effort to buy up the country's 20,500 picture theatres and encouraging them to spend \$250,000,000 a year on theatre construction. And now bankers were sitting in on board meetings and giving producers orders. Bankers, having penetrated the secrets of the picture corporations' books and studio overhead, were sharing generously in the once private "golden harvest of the producers." Finding that it wasn't the name of a lion roaring on a title sheet, but the name of a star that drew that \$750,000,000 gross at the box-office, bankers were objecting to the abuse of stars exemplified by Paramount's ruthless blackballing of Valentino. (He got \$2,000 for making *The Sheik*.)

Naturally, the producers did not even consider giving up cutting salaries and firing stars in order to make up their losses and to refresh their prestige. It was simply a question



1925: Mae Murray in von Stroheim's "The Merry Widow".

of using a subtler technique to be confirmed by box-office failure. And marked first for destruction was Lillian Gish. She was the obvious choice. Among all the detestable stars who stood between the movie moguls and the full realisation of their greed and self-aggrandisement, it was Lillian Gish who most painfully imposed her picture knowledge and business acumen upon the producers. She was a timely martyr also, being Hollywood's radiant symbol of purity standing in the light of the new sex star.

Because it was also the glorious year when Will Hays had killed censorship in all but five states. Of these, New York was the only one that mattered—meaning New York City where Mr. Hays had thoughtfully set up the National Board of Review, “opposed to legal censorship and in favour of the constructive method of selecting the better pictures,” which had already put a passing mark on the producers’ test runs with adult pictures of sexual realism. *A Woman of Paris*, *Greed* and *The Salvation Hunters* had also been tolerated by the public. It had accepted the new hero with the conscienceless sophistication of Adolphe Menjou and the unbridled manliness of John Gilbert, mounted on the beloved proposition that practically all women are whores anyhow. Everything was set for the box-office treasure where the producers’ heart lay, when they were pulled up with the realisation that they had no heroine with youth, beauty and personality enough to make free love sympathetic. To be beautifully handled, a female star’s picture still had to have a tag showing marriage. Mae Murray, fighting for her virtue against von Stroheim’s direction in *The Merry Widow*, had proved the impossibility of transmuting established stars into the new gold. The worldly woman type, given a whirl with Edna Purviance, Florence Vidor and Aileen Pringle, was too remote and mature to intrigue the public. The passionate Negri, after being worked over by Paramount for three years, was dead at the box-office. And the producers were driving actresses out of their minds—draping Barbara LaMarr in nun’s veils to make her sympathetic and sticking a rose between the teeth of Hollywood’s most celebrated screen virgin, Lois Wilson, to make her sexy.

And then in the early spring of 1925, Louis B. Mayer found her! Looking at Greta Garbo in *Gosta Berling* in Berlin, he knew as sure as he was alive that he had found a sexual symbol beyond his imagining. Here was a face as purely beautiful as Michelangelo’s Mary of the Pieta, yet glowing with passion. The suffering of her soul was such that the American public would forgive all thirty-nine of her affairs in *The Torrent*. At last—marriage—the obstacle standing between sex and pleasure could be done away with! At last, an answer to young actresses who wanted to play good girls! Perfume the casting couch! Bring on the hair bleach, the eyebrow tweezers and the false eyelashes!

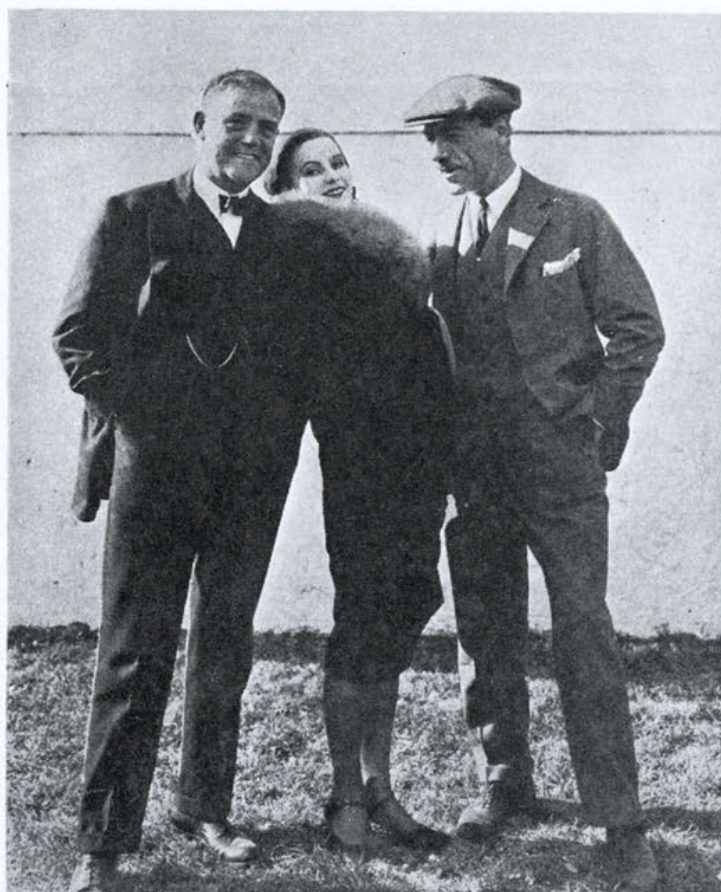
As for the established women stars, it was only a question of a year or two until the powerful support of the studios would be withdrawn from all of them. The timely coincidence of talking pictures served as a plausible reason to the public for the disappearance of many favourites. But there wasn’t an actress in Hollywood who didn’t understand the true reason. Greta Garbo. From the moment *The Torrent* went into production, no actress was ever again to be quite happy in herself. The whole MGM studio, including Monta Bell, the director, watched the daily rushes with amazement as Garbo created out of the stalest, thinnest material the complex, enchanting shadow of a soul upon the screen. And it was such a gigantic shadow that people didn’t speak of it. At parties, two or three times a week, I would see



1930: Greta Garbo in Clarence Brown's "Romance".

Norma Shearer and Irving Thalberg, Hunt Stromberg, Paul Bern, Jack Conway and Clarence Brown, all of whom worked at MGM. By chance, if one of the men was so inhumane as to speak of a Garbo picture, one of the girls would say, “Yes, isn’t she divine?” and hurry on to a less despairing subject.

Another name never mentioned in endless shop talk was that of Lillian Gish. The guilty, incredible suspicion that MGM had put her under contract at a spectacular salary in order methodically to destroy her might not have been forced upon me had I not seen *The Wind* at the Dryden Theatre in Rochester’s Eastman House one night in 1956. I had never heard of it! And I could find no clue to its making. Gish’s clothes were charmingly contrived from all periods, from no period. Millers had been making those dancing slippers since 1915. Her hair was either piled up in a dateless fashion on top of her head or swirling round her throat and shoulders, more tormenting than the wind. Victor Seastrom [Sjöström], in his direction shared her art of escaping time and place. They were meant for each other—Seastrom and Gish—like the perfume and the rose. After the picture, I could hardly wait to ask Jim Card when and where it was made. “In Hollywood in 1927 at MGM? Why, I was there then, working at Paramount! How come I never heard a word about *The Wind*?” Determined to solve this mystery of obliteration, I went at once to the files of *Photoplay* magazine. Its editor, James Quirk, seems to have wept and raged, danced and exulted, with every heartbeat of the MGM executives.



Garbo with Mauritz Stiller (right). A photograph taken soon after their arrival in Hollywood.

And I found that the last kindness *Photoplay* showed Lillian Gish, until after she left the MGM studio, appeared in a caption under her photograph in the October 1924 issue. *Romola* was "one of the highly promising things of the new film season." From then on, I pursued Quirk's fascinating operations on Gish like Sherlock Holmes.

Her unprecedented contract (\$800,000 for six pictures in two years) was belatedly tossed off on a back page in June, 1925. In September, even before her first picture, *La Boheme*, had gone into production, *Photoplay* became unaccountably worked up in an editorial reading: "What does the future hold for Lillian Gish? Criticism has its fads and fancies and it has in the past few years become fashionable to laud her as the Duse of the screen, yet, since she left Mr. Griffith's studios, nothing has appeared which should give her artistic preference over other actresses who have earned high places. She has always played the frail girl caught in the cruel maelstrom of life, battling helplessly for her honour or her happiness. She has a philosophy of life which she adheres to with a deliberateness that amounts almost to a religion, reminding me of a girlish 'Whistler's mother'. While she may not be the intellectual personality some writers are so fond of seeing in her because of her serenity, she has a soundness of business judgment which has enabled her to capitalise her screen personality with one of the largest salaries . . . Wouldn't it be interesting to see Gish play a Barbara LaMarr role, for Duse was a versatile actress, if ever there was one."

With the release of *La Boheme*, in March 1926, Quirk himself put the question to his more than 2,000,000 readers in a long piece, 'The Enigma of the Screen'. "Lillian Gish has never become definitely established in a place of public favour . . . She achieves greatness of effect through a single phase of emotion—namely, hysteria . . . As a regular commercial routine star grinding on schedule with whatever

material is at hand, her fate at the box-office would be as tragic as it invariably is on the screen . . . Witnesses of the playing of scenes in *La Boheme* felt this strongly. The acting methods of John Gilbert and Miss Gish are entirely different. He expressed the opinion that she was the great artist of the screen and that she knew more technically than anyone else. Yet plainly his work was suffering under that method."

D. W. Griffith was involved in an interview printed in December. "Asked about Miss Gish, in view of her more recent film roles, he countered, 'Who is greater?'"

The June 1926 Brief Review of *La Boheme* read: "A simple love story wonderfully directed by King Vidor and acted with much skill by John Gilbert. Lillian Gish is also in the cast." In October *The Scarlet Letter* was reviewed with: "Lillian Gish wears the red letter of sin with her stock virginal sweetness." The gossip pages were seeded with items like: "Who is your choice for Lorelei Lee in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*? Ours is Lillian Gish. But, failing to get Lillian, we suggest that Paramount borrow the services of Harry Langdon." In July, under a full page profile of Mae Murray, was tucked the line: "For here is a picture of Mae that makes her look just the way Lillian Gish would look if Lillian had IT." In May, following a straightforward article by Peter B. Kyne about pictures being the reflection of the producers' taste, not of the public's demand, the following paragraph was slapped on at the end: "Some months ago, Mr. Louis B. Mayer asked me to write a story to feature Miss Lillian Gish. I asked him what type of story he required for her and he said he didn't know, but that it was certain she would have to suffer a lot. Alas, poor Louis! I know him well!"

In time I became such a good Quirk student that, after the completion of *The Temptress* when Garbo's power and demands were beginning to tell on MGM, I predicted the beginning of her nasty publicity in the July 1926 issue. And sure enough, the first threat of the only thing Garbo feared—deportation—was conveyed to her in one of those "why don't they go back where they came from" articles titled "The Foreign Legion in Hollywood". Will Hays' friends in the Department of Immigration were coming in handy for something besides getting the producers' relations into the country.

Compared to Quirk's finished mauling of Lillian Gish, MGM's application of the dig-your-own-grave technique was a sloppy job which was not to achieve a slick finish till the time after the death of Irving Thalberg in 1936, when Mayer began restocking his stables with actresses closer to his heart, working on that insoluble problem of how to make a box-office star without at the same time making her unattainable. Eased out with full approval, in the perfection of their beauty, art and popularity, were Jeannette MacDonald, Joan Crawford, Norma Shearer, and finally Garbo.

With Gish it was a question of how to get her to make a real stinker. Under her supervision, *La Boheme* and *The Scarlet Letter* were fine pictures. So while she was called away to bring her sick mother home from London, the studio carefully framed a picture postcard called *Annie Laurie* which she returned to find all ready to shoot—sets, costumes and Norman Kerry. Back in charge she next made *The Wind*, which was so loaded with sex and violence that MGM held up its release until the first Academy Award had been safely dealt to Janet Gaynor. And then Gish's strength failed and she accepted a dreary studio property, *The Enemy*. She could go now, MGM said, she needn't make the sixth picture. At last Quirk was able to set her up as an example and a warning to any actress who might presume beyond sex and beauty. MGM had let her go because she got \$8,000 a week! And, he developed, without a blush, all the pictures made on her say-so were box-office failures.

Stigmatised as a grasping, silly, sexless antique, at the age

of 31 the great Lillian Gish left Hollywood forever, without a head turned to mark her departure. "A shadow's shadow—a world of shadows."

3

There is something fateful now in remembering that after Gish ran *Gosta Berling* to look at Lars Hansen for *The Scarlet Letter*, she said that she had faith in Mayer because he had brought over Greta Garbo. Not possibly could she have guessed that this event would make Gish roles obsolete as fast as the studio could clean up her contract. Even less could she have guessed that uprooting her as a chaste reproach in the new paradise of sex films would become less imperative than getting her out of Garbo's meditative sight. Before *The Torrent* started, while the studio kept Garbo hanging around the lot (we're paying you, aren't we?) making publicity stills, she was able to observe Gish at work on *La Boheme*. Watching the only American star whose integrity, dedication and will brought her work up to the standards of order and excellence she had learned in Europe, Garbo saw that the helpless actress being churned in a clabber of expedience, irresolution, unpredictable hours and horseplay was not necessarily the law of American film production.

The May, 1926, *Photoplay* quoted Garbo as saying "I will be glad when I am a beeg star like Lillian Gish. Then I will not need publicity and to have peectures taken shaking hands with a prize fighter." But no amount of the studio's calculated 'dumb Swede' publicity could alter the fact that Garbo could read the box-office figures in *Variety* and get exactly the same answers Louis B. Mayer got.

La Boheme and *The Torrent* opened the same week in February, 1926, on Broadway. *La Boheme*, a great story with a great director, King Vidor, and two great stars, Lillian Gish and John Gilbert, did average business at the Embassy Theatre. Lillian Gish got \$400,000 a year. *The Torrent*, a senseless story with a fair director and Ricardo Cortez, a comic Valentino-type leading man, and an unknown actress, Garbo, did top business at the Capitol Theatre. Garbo got \$16,000 a year.

After *The Temptress*, when Garbo said, "I do not want to be a silly temptress. I cannot see any sense in getting dressed up and doing nothing but tempting men in pictures," Quirk was compelled to write in his December editorial: "When

you learn to speak English, gal, inquire how many beautiful and clever girls have been absolutely ruined by playing good women without ever a chance to show how bad they could be. Some actresses would give a year's salary if they could once be permitted to play a hell-raising, double-crossing censor-teaser for six reels. There are exceptions, of course. Lillian Gish continues to demonstrate that virtue can be its own reward to the tune of eight thousand bucks a week." Nevertheless, *Anna Karenina*, which had been announced in November as going into production with Lillian Gish, became *Love* with Greta Garbo.

Love was Garbo's first picture after signing a new MGM contract in May, 1927. After the long hold-out off salary, her business triumph over the studio was collecting with stunning impact on seven months of nation-wide publicity. The studio had not reckoned on defeat and its consequences. And the victory of one friendless girl in an alien land over the best brains of a great corporation had rocked all Hollywood. In the fury of the battle, Quirk had laid it on the line for Garbo in the April, 1927, *Photoplay*. "Metro is said to have told Garbo that, unless she signs, she will be deported at the end of her passport time limit, in June." The revelation of this pressure was later masked by the invention of the "I tank I go home" gag.

Because, if Garbo had really wanted to go home, she would have gotten her \$7,500 a week—and double. But she dared not risk even a scheming departure. For two years she had worked at MGM in that climate of worship and service which had secured the purity of her art. And, as well as she knew that she was Queen of all movie stars—then and forever—she knew that to leave her kingdom was to become a wandering tarnished star like all the rest.

How well she knew her genius was revealed to me when I met her one Sunday in the summer of 1928 at the house of the writer Benjamin Glazer. His wife, Alice, was a witty, outrageous woman perfectly suited to Garbo's shyness and my sulky discontent. Apart from the other guests clattering through lunch in the patio, Garbo and I sat with Alice drinking coffee in a little breakfast room. The subject of the conversation, of course, was Alice's and therefore personal. I had divorced Eddie Sutherland in June, and while Alice poked into my private life with ribald questions and the worst possible assumptions, Garbo and I sat laughing

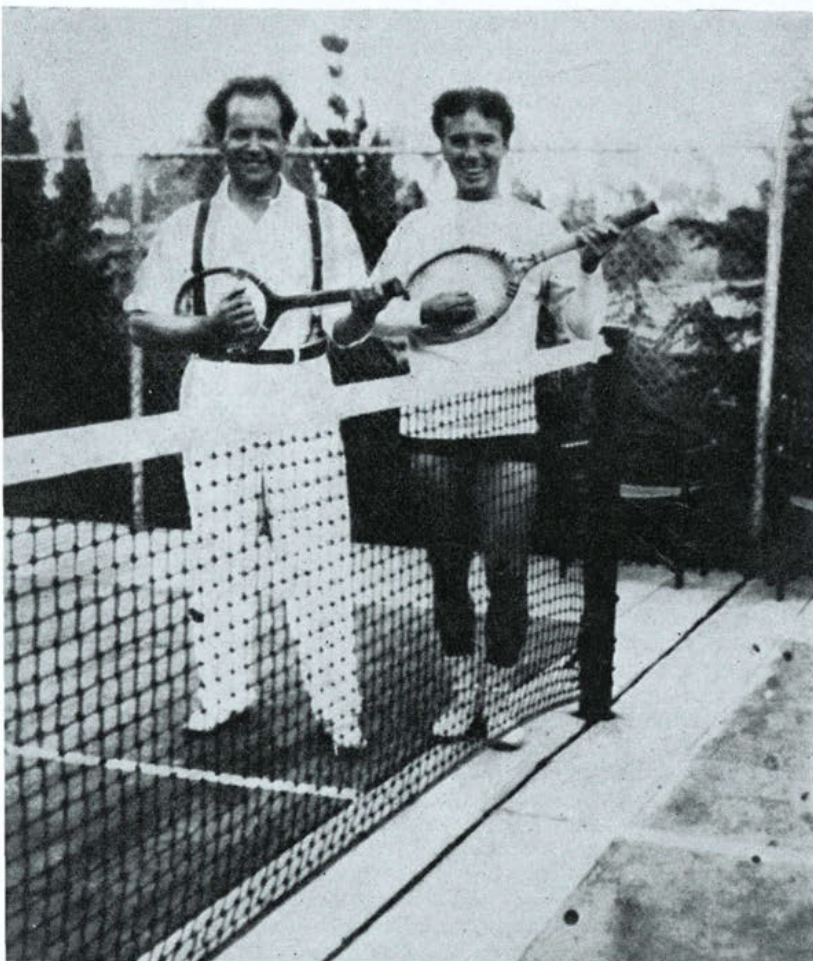
(Continued on page 51)

1926: Left: "The Scarlet Letter"; right: "The Torrent". "... Hollywood's radiant symbol of purity standing in the light of the new sex star."



JOHN GILLETT

The best at Brussels



'Top Directors': a rare photograph of Chaplin and Eisenstein together.

WHICH ARE THE best films ever made? If you had been in Brussels in October during the last week of the Exhibition, you would not have been given a definite answer, though in all probability you would have made a list of your own. It seems unlikely that the Belgian Cinémathèque, which organised the event, could have anticipated the huge enthusiasm which the showing of the so-called Best Films of All Time aroused among the general public.

The Exhibition itself was very crowded during this period, many people may have attended the shows merely out of casual curiosity, yet one sensed a hard core of enthusiasm, a desire to share in the 'game'. Of course, many of the films were well worth seeing again; even so, it was surprising to find the 2,000 seats of the Grand Auditorium filled for each performance. On some over-crowded evenings, quite extraordinary scenes developed as the determined public elbowed and jostled their way in, suffering bruises and at least one bloody nose in the process.

And yet, despite the enthusiasm and the endless discussions, it was difficult not to feel a certain frustration about the whole exercise. Given several scores of titles to play with, one could probably compile a list which would cover the main streams of world cinema over the past sixty years. A list of the most popular twelve must automatically exclude worthwhile, if less known, works. In the event, the choice made by 117 historians from 26 countries afforded no

surprises: the twelve films with the highest votes indicated a safe, conformist and academic approach. *Battleship Potemkin* was an easy winner with 100 votes, followed by *The Gold Rush* and *Bicycle Thieves* with 85 each; then *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, 78; *La Grande Illusion*, 72; *Greed*, 71; *Intolerance*, 61; *Mother*, 54; *Citizen Kane*, 50; *Earth*, 47; *The Last Laugh*, 45; and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 43*.

This selection seems to me to reflect the critical mood of the 1930's rather than that of today: there is undue emphasis on the silent cinema, only three sound films are included, and none of these is later than 1948. Although many of the cinema's greatest artists and innovators are represented, the choice of an individual director's work often seems strange in relation to his total output. In what way, for instance, is *The Gold Rush* superior as a total achievement to *City Lights* (only 32 votes)? Why is *La Grande Illusion* greater than *La Règle du Jeu*? This brings us back of course to the old problem of personal preference; even so, the choice suggests that some historians' memories are not as sound as they might be.

Armed with the controversial Twelve, it was the thankless task of a Second Jury of young film-makers (assembled for the occasion in Brussels) to classify the films according to their value today. After re-viewing all the films and debating for ten hours, it was not surprising that the jurors (Robert Aldrich, Alexandre Astruc, Juan-Antonio Bardem, Michael Cacoyannis, Alexander Mackendrick, Francesco Maselli and Satyajit Ray) failed to reach a satisfactory conclusion. The audience on the last night, however, seemed all set for a prophetic announcement: at last, the Best Film of All Time would be revealed! What they got, in fact, was a statement admitting that the style and content of the twelve contestants defied classification, a note of regret that several important schools, such as the Japanese, had been omitted, and a list of six titles which "emerged as having, for us as film-makers, a living and lasting value." The reading of this list (comprising *Potemkin*, *The Gold Rush*, *La Grande Illusion*, *Bicycle Thieves*, *Mother* and *Jeanne d'Arc*), met with a barrage of cheers, hoots, suggestions of incompetence and shouts of "Où est Kane?" from the back.

It was obvious that most of the six excluded titles had partisans all over the hall, many of them determined to make their presence felt. The omission of *Kane* came as a great shock and disappointment (even more curious, perhaps, when one considers its influence on the work of at least two of the jurors); and while *Greed* may not be Stroheim's most completely satisfying work, it seemed odd that its importance and influence was not recognised. Undeterred by their noisy reception, the individual jurors went on to comment on their own choices; and it became clear that *Jeanne d'Arc* and *La Grande Illusion* were the prime favourites with almost everyone. Aldrich defended *Kane* and Satyajit Ray spoke up gallantly for *Earth*, while admitting that during the final voting he was in the minority. (Perhaps it *does* take a poet to recognise a poet.) After both floor and platform had had their say, and since there was no outright

* By combining the number of votes obtained by each director for all of his films mentioned in the ballot, the following top twelve emerged: Chaplin, 250 votes; Eisenstein, 168; Clair, 135; de Sica 125; Griffith, 123; Ford, 107; Renoir, 105; Dreyer, 99; von Stroheim, 93; Pudovkin, 91; Murnau, 90; Flaherty, 82. Owing to the splitting of votes, some directors appear here who are not represented among the Top Twelve films.

winner, *A Nous la Liberté* was screened instead—a nicely anarchistic choice in the circumstances. Later, in the bar, some people began asking why this was not in the first Twelve. For a moment, I feared that the whole business might be starting all over again . . .

Having earlier in the day attended the meeting of a Third Jury, under the chairmanship of Jacques Brunius, I was now fully aware how passionate these debates could become. This jury came into being when, alarmed by the yawning gaps in the official list, a group of critics and writers from half-a-dozen countries decided that recognition must be given to some neglected directors and films. A brief glance through the complete list of the historians' votes made it clear that, as far as the cinema is concerned, one half of the world does not know what the other half is doing. How else can one explain the pitifully few votes cast for so many works with a quality of greatness? A few examples might include: *Arsenal*, 7; *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, 5; *Fires Were Started*, 3; *The General*, 6; *Ikiru*, 6; *The Magnificent Ambersons*, 6; *Nuit et Brouillard*, 1; *Partie de Campagne*, 5; *Pather Panchali*, 4; *Quatorze Juillet*, 2; *The Tokyo Story*, 3; *Tol'able David*, 4; *Ugetsu Monogatari*, 9; *A Walk in the Sun*, 2.

The meeting, at which these and other titles were discussed, soon exposed fundamental areas of disagreement. This was not surprising, perhaps, in a company including the extreme "isolationist" French critical wing, two Americans (one quiet, the other volatile), and a British contingent consisting of Dilys Powell, Marie Seton, John Maddison, with myself vainly trying to uphold British prestige with a plea for Humphrey Jennings. Although we managed to achieve mutual agreement on about six titles, fierce partisanship ensued when private adorations were questioned, the most hotly contested title being Henry Hathaway's *Peter Ibbetson*. Ado Kyrrou's spirited defence of his idol ("one of the world's great love films") found some support and equally determined resistance; eventually tempers were lost over points of procedure and ranting began.

The announcement of this "rebel" award (named after

Harry Langdon) was, incidentally, received with considerable public acclamation. And a choice which included *L'Atalante*, *L'Age d'Or*, *La Terra Trema*, *Sherlock Jnr.*, *Rashomon*, *Hôtel des Invalides*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki* is surely a step in the right direction. Though I could not personally subscribe to the remaining winners—*Underworld* (which I have not seen), *Dreigroschenoper*, *Peter Ibbetson*, *Smiles of a Summer Night*—it could have been much worse. Someone might have advocated a title from further along the lunatic fringe!

2

Despite the debating, we still found time to see films—sometimes three or four a day. The Belgian Cinémathèque had taken great pains to obtain good copies of the competition films and in several cases (*Jeanne d'Arc*, *Greed*, *La Grande Illusion*) the prints included some scenes new to many of the historians and critics present. This was, in itself, rather encouraging; after one has seen worn, incomplete prints of silent films for so long, one begins to doubt whether complete copies exist anywhere.

In the case of *Earth*, expectations were more than fulfilled. This copy, taken from the original Moscow negative (which, as far as I know, had never before been seen in the West), included all the scenes cut by the Russians for their distribution and later by Western censors and distributors. Now, at last, the tractor scene made sense (the men urinate into the machine to get it going again); the funeral procession for Vassili is made even more poignant by the addition of several cross-cut episodes showing the praying priest and the terrible anguish of the fiancée, nude and prostrate in her room; and there is a beautiful shot of the crowd looking upwards just prior to the final nature sequence. Even more unexpected was the epilogue following the last shot of the apples—a man and woman stare ecstatically at each other as the final image fades. (So Dovzhenko did finish on his people, after all! At the moment, I am a little uncertain as to which ending seems best.) Seeing it again, anyhow, confirmed that this is one of the truly fundamental works

Out: "*La Règle du Jeu*" (17 votes): In: "*La Grande Illusion*" (72 votes).



of the cinema. Dovzhenko's passionate, humanistic vision of life and death (or, as he would prefer it, death and life) embraces all the essential truths; and if, like some members of the Brussels Jury, you cannot find it in your heart to place it among the First Six, then perhaps it is time to reconsider your response to this medium.

Similar controversy greeted the Western premiere of *Ivan the Terrible*, Part Two, a long-awaited event which provided the centre-piece of the whole manifestation. The film has already been discussed in *SIGHT AND SOUND* (Spring, 1958) and will no doubt be written about again, so I will limit myself to brief impressions. First, on the question of its banning, it seems likely that Stalin and the Soviet authorities objected to the picture of Ivan as a tormented, introspective ruler, torn between religious mysticism and his desire to build up a strong, independent state. It is not difficult to find parallels in the perpetuation of the theory that power corrupts. This second part is even more stylised than the first—if you cannot accept the overall conception, then the film is almost a complete loss. But, once the style has been assimilated and *felt* by the spectator, the film takes on the rich grandeur of a Mussorgsky opera or a Shakespeare drama. Eisenstein's marvellous visual imagination is apparent not only in the superb decor and costumes, but in the way individual sequences are constructed; and in the great assassination scene his genius seems to soar freely and widely, a pure fusion of emotion and intellect. (Here, and elsewhere, Prokofiev has provided the cinema's greatest music.)

Although this version shows obvious signs of having been chopped about—it will be a task of high scholarship to discover what additional scenes Eisenstein shot and were later discarded by other hands—this last will and testament of the cinema's most complex and tormented artist is a unique achievement. The Soviet delegation at Brussels were somewhat evasive and reticent when questioned about the film. Nikolai Cherkassov had obviously found himself at variance with Eisenstein on several issues; but, in conversa-

tion, he displayed all the charm, vanity and aplomb of a great actor. And, in profile at least, he is still every inch an Ivan.

There were other discoveries and disappointments in a series of subsidiary screenings sometimes optimistically termed "unrecognised masterpieces". A curiously mixed bag, with a hard core of silent German and Russian pictures, this series undoubtedly helped to fill in some gaps. Although I was pleased to catch von Gerlach's *Vanina* (with its beautiful design and manipulation of crowds) and Jessner's *Hinter-treppe*, I have no strong desire to watch them again. The German cinema of the early 1920's certainly confirms its reputation for self-pity, heavy, doom-laden acting and a capacity for slowing down the simplest physical movement to a snail's pace. Pabst's *Secrets of the Soul* also disappointed for different reasons: its textbook psychology seems dated and obvious today. An even rarer discovery, Huston's *Battle of San Pietro*, seemed much less stark and bitter than its reputation had suggested and suffered from a fearsome, saccharine music score. Some moving shots of soldiers in battle and a refreshingly unsentimental view of 'liberation' can be counted among its assets.

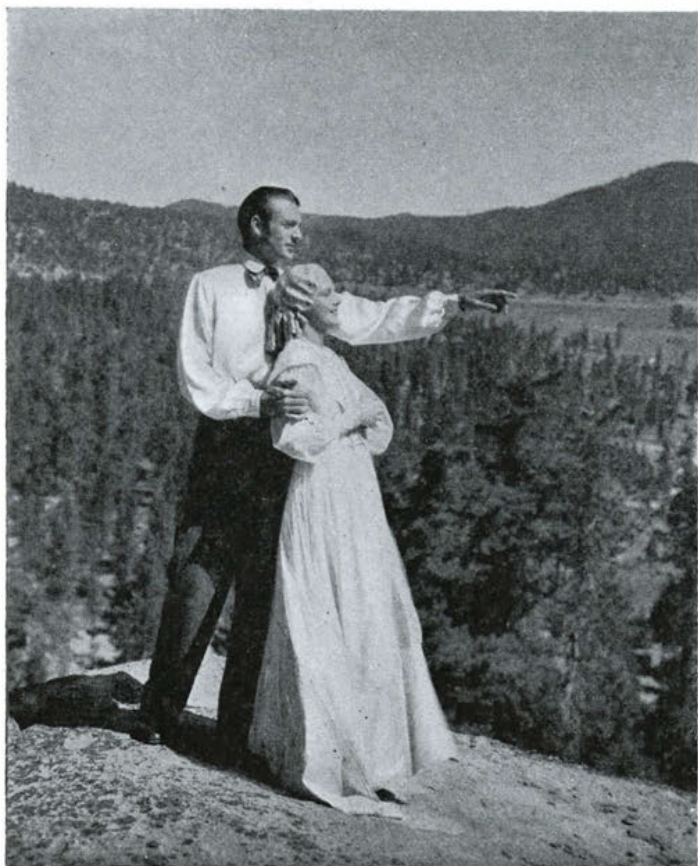
Fortunately, about half-a-dozen discoveries produced an authentic thrill of excitement, notably Carl Junghans' German-Czech *So ist das Leben* (1929), a companion piece to the Social Democrat school of Jutzi, Metzner and the other left-wing German film-makers of this rich period. Though handicapped by self-conscious montage effects, Junghans' sad, expressive imagery rises to great heights in a final funeral scene, in itself a perfect piece of silent filmmaking. Two early Russian films by Protazanov, *The Anna Cross* and *The Forty-First*, were distinguished by their clean, economical handling and apt selection of detail. Choukrai's recent remake of *The Forty-First*, incidentally, is not only based very closely on the original, but copies some camera set-ups as well.

An important French documentary, *Le Retour*, supervised by Henri Cartier-Bresson, was a harrowing record of the return of Allied prisoners-of-war from German camps, told with heart-rending compassion and full of images in which despair is slowly transformed into hope and triumph. But perhaps the most curious of these miscellaneous delvings into the past was a 1913 Belgian film called *Maudite soit la Guerre* prophesying the first world war in visions of aeroplanes, ground warfare and broken homes. Full of advanced camerawork and unusual compositions, its anti-war sentiments seemed strong even today, despite the naivetes in acting and presentation.

3

Finally, a quick look from the past to the possible future. The various national pavilions in the Exhibition offered several experiments in film technique and screen-size, of which I was able to visit three. Disney's *Circarama* envelops the audience completely with eleven screens and transports it to American cities and beauty spots. Only a gimmick, perhaps, but effective enough for a few minutes. The Soviet Kinopanorama turned out to be a first cousin to America's Cinerama—I saw the second production, *The Magic Mirror*, which had some variable travelogue items, a marvellous interlude with a folk dance group and an exciting troika ride. Excellent sound and colour, plus the inevitable joins down the middle. In a strange entertainment called *Lanterna Magica*, the Czechs attempted to combine film with live action (usually groups of dancers) on the stage. This often produced rather outlandish results, though a short number involving one live and one projected dancer had its own charm and novelty value. Where will they go from here?

"One of the world's great love films". . . . ? Gary Cooper and Ann Harding in "Peter Ibbetson", chosen by the critics' jury.



the festivals: LONDON

ESTABLISHING A FILM FESTIVAL is a tricky business. It has to achieve a tone, a character, a point; it is not enough simply to assemble films, unless the mood is created which transforms a viewing session into a festival. The London Film Festival, first made possible in 1957 by collaboration between the British Film Institute and the *Sunday Times*, mounted in 1958 by the Institute in association with the London County Council, is still at the stage of an experiment—and a successful one. By gathering its material from other festivals, and picking where possible the best, it can avoid the dangerous diplomacies, the balancing of interests, that so often occur on these occasions. Like most festivals this one has a commercial part to play, in that it provides an entirely new shop-window for foreign distributors to display their products; and many of these will sooner or later reach a commercial cinema. From the point of view of the audience, success is sufficiently assured in the form of an over-crowded National Film Theatre.

The problem, though, is to create a sense of occasion—and in a city as large as London, with a press that gives so relatively small a share of its space to the cinema, and continually changing audiences who come to see a single film rather than to experience a festival, none of this is simple. Where a festival imposes itself on a city like Cannes or Venice, it easily becomes lost in London. But the London Festival, after two years, is discovering its character as it goes along.

Although no prizes are given, the Festival was last year the occasion for the presentation of two awards. The Richard Winnington Award, presented previously at Edinburgh, went to Clouzot's *Le Mystère Picasso*. The new Sutherland Trophy, presented to the Institute by its patron, the Duke of Sutherland, goes to the maker of the "most original and imaginative film introduced at the National Film Theatre during the year." The first award was made to Yasujiro Ozu's *The Tokyo Story*, with a special mention for Jiri Trnka's *The Luchian War*. This presentation was made by Alec Guinness on behalf of the Institute.

Twenty new features were presented during the 1958 Festival: those not previously covered in SIGHT AND SOUND are reviewed in the following notes:—

LES AMANTS (Venice: Special Jury Prize)

LOUIS MALLE'S ACKNOWLEDGED masters are Tati and Bresson. Nevertheless, after seeing *Les Amants* one thinks irresistibly of Renoir—and not just because Gaston Modot plays almost the



Above: Leopoldo Torre Nilsson's "El Sequestrador". Centre: Jeanne Moreau in "Les Amants". Below: "The Legend of Narayama".

same role that he did in *Règle du Jeu*. *Les Amants* is not on the same level of achievement, but it is in a way a concentrated version of the theme of Renoir's masterpiece: the arrival of a pure innocent at a country house full of superficial and brittle people. Here, however, the innocent not only walks away alive but even takes his hostess with him—although there is some doubt as to whether his victory is final. *Les Amants* is a free adaptation of an 18th century story, *Point de Lendemain* (*No Tomorrow*) by Dominique-Vivant, Baron Denon, and the film originally bore the story's title; indeed, the ambiguous ending is perhaps the picture's least successful element. But no matter. Here is a film (Malle's second; he is 25) that is as promising as Chabrol's *Le Beau Serge*. Only the late Duff Cooper could successfully have sub-titled Louise de Vilmorin's magnificent dialogue. Its dryness, concision and exactness beautifully counterpoint the ease and fluidity of Decae's camerawork and of the musical score. And never before has one seen cinemascope breadth so successfully combined with the suggestion of depth. (Maybe all the solemn French theorising about these matters pays off?) The direction of the actors is very skilful; Jeanne Moreau, in particular, after several years of disappointing performances, here achieves a great one. It would be an insult to call this film 'adult' or 'civilised'; but like all good films it has naturally been made by civilised adults, and it is firmly in that great French tradition which began with Mlle. de Scudery's "Carte du Tendre"—against which, by the way, the titles are superimposed. To ask whether the film is 'healthy' is impertinent, in every sense of the word.—

RICHARD ROUD.

AT MIDNIGHT (Brussels) and THE SMUGGLERS (Karlovy Vary)

THE TWO HUNGARIAN films shown in the Festival gave a fair picture of the present artistic and political attitudes of film-makers in Hungary. *At Midnight* (director, György Révész) is a story of love and marriage between a well-known actor and a ballerina, which reaches a point of crisis when she wants to leave the country and he decides to stay. A film which keeps close to the surface, never going behind the obvious, *At Midnight* seems to be a continuation of the line of harsh 'play-films' (a literal translation of the Hungarian expression for feature film)—nothing serious, just play. One scarcely feels the hand of the director, except in some affectedly tilted camera angles and in the calculated and tricky linking together of the sequences in a weak story. By contrast, Félix Máriássy's *The Smugglers* is a director's film. What is exciting here is less the story itself than the lifelike and poetic presentation of it. As in his former films, Máriássy shows his talent for creating atmosphere; he knows his milieu; he feels, and helps us to feel, a kind of tenderness towards his story and its people; and he recognises the links between political, historical conditions and a personal, human drama.

The films represent degrees of honesty. *At Midnight* is partly concerned with the revolution of 1956; but at this point director and scriptwriter manage to evade the issue by transferring the setting to a holiday resort remote from Budapest and the revolution—and from the necessity to adopt an attitude. The characters of *The Smugglers* would like to live without humiliation, to be free from the pressure of circumstances—but they must give way to sustain existence. "This film is bad," wrote the official critic of the official Hungarian newspaper, "because of its dim ideological content." In fact, this 'dimness' looks rather clear.—ROBERT VAS.

THE BEACH—El Sequestrador (Venice)

ONE OF THE DISCOVERIES of last year's London Festival was Leopoldo Torre Nilsson's *House of the Angel*, a sensitively evocative study of an adolescent girl. In this film (correctly translated as *The Kidnapper*), Torre Nilsson has been more ambitious. In moving from the chic quarters of Buenos Aires to the outskirts, however, he seems to have lost his bearings. He has apparently tried to make a film of social protest, or at least one which shows how poverty can corrupt those stricken by it. But little boys selling dirty postcards, a rape in a cemetery chapel, and a baby eaten by a pig can add up not to social comment but to something disturbingly farcical: by over-stating his case, he has lost it. If

one thinks for a moment of Buñuel's *Los Olvidados*, one sees immediately that it is the lack of any realised social context that dooms *The Kidnapper*. The world inhabited by Flavia and Berto, Gustavo and Beluso, is not a real one. And its unreality is further accentuated by the character of the unfrocked American priest who is given to dragging out a photograph of Roosevelt, saluting, and singing the "Star Spangled Banner". The ironical happy ending (the candy-floss lady leaves the boys her barrow, and they all go off cheerfully to peddle the stuff) strengthens one's suspicions that Torre Nilsson is trying to have his candy-floss and eat it too.—R.R.

H.8 (Pula: Grand Prix)

A BUS IS IN collision with a lorry on a rainy night in Yugoslavia—what is the logic, if any, behind the accident, why are some people killed and others not? It is this theme, with all its possibilities for tragic irony, which the makers of *H.8* (director, N. Tanhofer) have used for the purposes of suspense and character exploration. We, the audience, know that the accident will happen; we know which seats are to be the fatal ones; and as the passengers circulate from place to place in the bus it becomes clear who ought to be in those seats at the time of the crash and who ought to survive. In the end, with rather predictable fatefulness, it is the good and lovable people who are killed. The film is made as a series of interlocking anecdotes, meant to expose a private drama concerning each passenger. But the aims of what might have been a penetrating analysis are foiled by the unadventurous mood of the film, the contrivance of the individual stories. The lives of these people have no apparent connection with their destinies: those who die are killed by chance, by pure accident, and the film ends virtually where it began—in unexplained disaster.—KENNETH CAVANDER.

THE LEGEND OF NARAYAMA (Venice)

FROM THE VERY beginning, with the sudden percussive clangings and strange strangled singing, we are transported to another world. An impossibly bizarre one, some may say, but such is the strength of Keisuke Kinoshita's conception that, at the end, this world is made real and absorbing. Judging from reports from Japan, this is one of the few successful attempts to re-create the Kabuki style in terms of the modern cinema. Kinoshita, in fact, retains many theatrical effects: there is much play with light and colour changes, the scenery suddenly moves away to reveal other settings, the whole design is deliberately stylised and studio-bound. Occasional over-calculation in these effects, and the undeniably slow movement of early scenes, may leave Western spectators feeling slight uneasiness and confusion. Yet from the moment when the preparations begin for the mother's ascent to the mountains (the legend describes how, to save food, the old people of the village are sent away to die alone), the hand of a master is evident. The terrible journey of mother and son through a maze of forest paths and up snowy mountain slopes is eloquent, poignant—and a *tour de force* of art direction. Kinoshita's control over the elements of his medium—music, colour, design, CinemaScope screen—is marvellously assured. From a set of stylised, sometimes remote conventions, he has fashioned a sombre tragedy, transcending time and place. This is a strange, beguiling film, the work of a poet.—JOHN GILLET.

MUHOMATSU, THE RICKSHAW MAN (Venice: Grand Prix)

THE FEROCIOUS EXTROVERT vitality of Toshiro Mifune's acting has long been a source of admiration; it was not until his portrayal of the Macbeth character in *Throne of Blood* that one became aware that this splendid actor was not beyond employing the 'rubber stamps' of acting, the effective tricks that came most easily to him, in fact, of blustering—bluster of a highly charged, authoritative order, but nevertheless bluster. So it is particularly gratifying to find here a new aspect of his talent: a gentle, vulnerable warmth. His picture of the rickshaw man in love with an



"Muhomatsu, the Rickshaw Man": Toshiro Mifune and Hideko Takamine.

inaccessible lady, so effortlessly right in social nuance and so moving in its restraint, places him undeniably among the world's finest performers.

In Tohoscope and Agfacolor, *The Rickshaw Man* is content to stay unpretentiously in its class as a highly efficient commercial production: tasteful colour, well chosen camera set-ups, excellent acting (Mifune is admirably partnered by Hideko Takamine), and perceptive attention to the social levels of the lady, her young son and the good-natured workman who so lovingly protects them, do much to disguise the novelettish nature of the story. It is a pity that the opening section—particularly an unsuccessful scene of comic anarchy in a theatre—establishes the film untidily. But once into its stride, it has some excellent moments and scenes. Characteristic of the director, Hiroshi Inagaki, at his best is the episode which shows the rickshaw man in the foreground playing with the lady's son, whom he has come across whilst taking a client for a ride. Far away, callously deserted, the client huffs and fumes round the up-ended rickshaw, a tiny dancing figure of rage, while the two squat, rapt in the serious business of repairing a kite. Scenes of this kind, expertly handled, set the tone of a warm, satisfying film.—DEREK PROUSE.

LA SFIDA (Venice: Special Jury Prize)

LA SFIDA HAS been made by Francesco Rosi, a young pupil of Visconti, to expose a side of Neapolitan life with bitter realism, showing the inevitable result of *hubris* in the fruit and vegetable trade and the implacable laws of the market and the price rings. In the event, one of the paradoxical effects of this film is the feeling of story-book artifice it creates. Vito, the handsome young opportunist who tries to break the monopoly of the gang boss Aiello, is drawn as a passionate, heroic figure; his squalid tenement

block provides him, romantically, with a lovely 'princess', Assunta, played by Rosanna Schiaffino—sulkily provocative as she hangs out the washing, and coyly yielding on a broken-down roof-top. During his short-lived success Vito moves into a fairy-tale world of luxury flats and fast cars; and when the gang boss's organisation catches up with him, Aiello is more of an avenging demon of mythology than the proud and unscrupulous crook of fact. Altogether, the film seems to have been made in a legendary world so private as to become positively unreal. Perhaps its story is too parochial to involve an alien audience; perhaps, too, the harsh photography, with its snapshot views of the back streets of Naples, and the over-bold, unsubtle lines of the characterisation have left the film without enough immediate appeal. *La Sfida*, for all its energetic assurance, stays firmly down in the underworld.—K.C.

TERMINUS LOVE—End station Liebe (Brussels)

A YOUNG FACTORY worker makes a bet with his friends that he can seduce a new arrival at the factory within the next few days; instead, he falls in love with the girl. Around this familiar plot, the script of *Terminus Love* is developed with careful respect for screen conventions. The most obvious instances are a wrestling match which becomes a public brawl, a wretchedly false scene between the boy and a tart, and the coincidence which leads to the lovers' final reconciliation. The director, Georg Tressler, seems determined to provide trivial distractions in almost every sequence, and the result is an air of calculation. But the film does give its people solid, believable backgrounds. The refreshing location work is matched by some convincing interiors; and the modest, attractive playing of Barbara Frey (counter-balancing Horst Buchholz's somewhat slick charm) is also on the right, realistic lines.—DEREK HILL.

OTHER FEATURES IN THE LONDON FESTIVAL: *Eva Wants to Sleep* (San Sebastian, Grand Prix, and Karlovy Vary); *Goha* (Cannes, Jury Prize); *The House Where I Live* (Brussels, United Nations Special Prize); *Ilya Muromets* (Karlovy Vary and Edinburgh); *The Last Day of Summer* (Venice Documentary Festival, Grand Prix); *A Matter of Dignity* (Cannes); *The Old Man and the Sea* (Brussels and Edinburgh); *Two Eyes, Twelve Hands* (Berlin, Special Jury Prize); *Wild Strawberries* (Berlin, Grand Prix); *The Wolf Trap* (Venice, Critics' Prize, and Karlovy Vary). Reports and reviews of these films can be found in the Summer and Autumn, 1958 numbers of SIGHT AND SOUND, or elsewhere in this issue.





Star quality is difficult to define. I'd say it was an awareness of technique. A skill which prevents anything coming between the actor and his audience. Gable has it. Doris Day has it. Jack Lemmon—and there's a really bright kid—has it.

The technique itself is built up from many things. But it starts with observation. All my life I've watched people. I was brought up on New York's East Side, a pretty tough district, but not a slum. I learned to speak Yiddish, and I learned to box. It was a pretty useful background for an actor. When we were making that run of gangster films in the 'thirties it was invaluable. I borrowed from life. A lot of kids that I knew ended up in the electric chair.

I've just finished a picture called *Never Steal Anything Small*. The closest thing to it, I'd say, was *The Threepenny Opera*. It's all about a bunch of crooks who try to operate on big-business lines. It's witty, and it has some good radical lyrics. Films must have some comment to make. They've got to keep moving. The old-style gangster film is as dead as mutton. We've said all there is to say, and we've said it in so many ways. I suppose at the time they fulfilled some kind of public need. But now that need has gone.

I directed my first film last year, a remake of *This Gun for Hire*, called *Short Cut to Hell*. A director who is also an actor has special problems. If you have youngsters in the cast, they tend to imitate you. I kept telling them 'For God's sake don't do anything like me. Be yourself. Mannerisms only get in the way . . .'



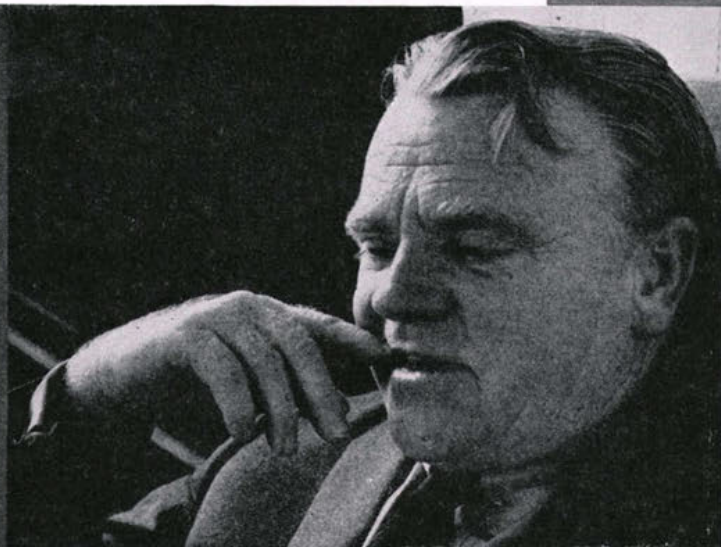
I guess it was vaudeville that made me into a pro. Working that way, under that kind of pressure, you learn a job by actually doing it. I'm not much on drama schools. I call them the 'Dear Ma and Pa please send' type of school. They provide a lifeline for the kid to crawl home by.

My wife and I ran a school once. We gave dancing lessons, and we thought we'd make a mint. All we did, though, was beat our brains just teaching those kids. Nobody paid their bills, and we ended up broke.

I still dance to keep myself in trim. I call it my skull practice. The toughest routine is one that Bill Robinson could do for seventeen minutes flat. You can either kill yourself or lose a lot of weight that way.

I live a pretty simple life; early to bed, early to rise. I don't smoke, and I only take the occasional drink. I live on a ranch where we breed trotting horses, and I have a farm where I'm trying to rear a special kind of beef. A couple of years ago I received an award from the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture for a new method of soil conservation.

I guess I shall still go on making pictures. The next one will be *The Admiral Halsey Story* which I shall do with Bob Montgomery. But I only work as much as I need to. Television? Believe me, I'm a happy man. Why should I want to go out looking for trouble?



I don't regard acting as anything sacred. When I went to Hollywood in 1930 I had to fill in a studio questionnaire. One of the questions it asked was 'How did you come to take up stage or screen work?' I gave my answer in two words: 'Needed job.' Now I work six months of the year. I never go to see my own films, never even see the rushes. When they're finished, they're finished . . .

I went into show-business strictly from hunger. Starvation helps to turn you into a good actor, I guess. I was a dancer at first, and for five years I played vaudeville. Then I had a bit part in a Maxwell Anderson play, *Outside Looking In*. My first film

was something called *Sinners' Holiday* with Joan Blondell. Then I made *Public Enemy*—a film in which I had to slug Mae Clark in the face with a grapefruit. We took it from a real-life incident in which a gangster named Heinie Weiss hit his girl in the face with an omelette . . .

Anyway, for years after, the grapefruit incident followed me around. Jokers in restaurants would send the waiter over to me with a tray full of sliced grapefruits. Even here in Dublin, I was asked by one guy to pose for a picture in which I was supposed to be landing him one with a grapefruit. Things like that make you wish you'd stayed at home.

Philip Oakes writes: SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DEVIL—a film about the Irish troubles—was shot in and around Dublin, with a British director, Michael Anderson, and a cast headed by James Cagney, Don Murray, Dana Wynter, Glynis Johns, and the Abbey Theatre's Ray McAnally.

For Cagney, it was his first film away from Hollywood. He stayed close to his hotel suite, studying his script, and polishing his Dublin accent. At 54, he is slightly deaf, and cups his hand around his right ear to follow the conversation; his paunch sags over his belt buckle; and his once-red hair, now heavily streaked with silver, looks an all-over pink.

His face is heavily weathered. The eyes disappear when he smiles. His voice is fast and husky. And he emphasises every other sentence by sudden jabs with his small, stubby fingers. The impression he gives however is one of contained vitality. He talks about himself only with some reluctance, and this conversation is compiled from two days' notes.

The pictures were taken by Simone.

CINEMA AND TELEVISION

Jean Renoir and
Roberto Rossellini
interviewed by
ANDRE BAZIN

Shortly before his death last November, the French critic André Bazin interviewed Jean Renoir and Roberto Rossellini for France Observateur. Both these directors have recently been working on projects for French television, and they are among the first of the leading European film-makers to approach the new medium. We are grateful to the editors of France Observateur for permission to publish a translation of this interview, which has been slightly abridged here.

RENOIR: I am preparing a film version of Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* for television. Although I've transferred the story to the present day, and to Paris, my adaptation is still faithful to the original. I'm going to introduce the programme with a little talk, as if it had to do with something uncanny that really happened a short time ago in a street in Paris.

ROSSELLINI: My first programme for French television will be about India. I made ten short films while I was there, with television in mind, and I'm doing the commentary myself as well as providing the necessary linking passages.

BAZIN: When you're making a television film, M. Renoir—shooting more or less off the cuff with several cameras—do you manage to keep a sense of actuality in the direction itself?

RENOIR: I would like to make this film—and this is where television gives me something valuable—in the spirit of *live* television. I'd like to make the film as though it were a live broadcast, shooting each scene only once, with the actors imagining that the public are directly receiving their words and gestures. Both the actors and the technicians should know that there will be no retakes; that, whether they succeed or not, they can't begin again.

In any case, we can only shoot once, since some parts of this film are being shot out in the streets and we can't afford to let the passers-by realise that we're filming. And so the actors and technicians must feel that every movement is final and irrevocable. I'd like to break with cinema technique, and very patiently build a large wall with little stones.

BAZIN: Obviously this kind of film can be made much more quickly than an ordinary cinema production.

RENOIR: I've just done a shooting script, and the result works out at a little under 400 shots. For some reason, I've discovered by experience that my shots usually average out at about five or six metres each (16-20 feet), though I know it sounds a bit ridiculous to gauge things this way. . . . Anyhow,

I imagine that 400 shots will give me a film of about 6,500 feet—in other words, of average length.

BAZIN: Are you thinking of showing the film in the commercial cinema as well as on TV?

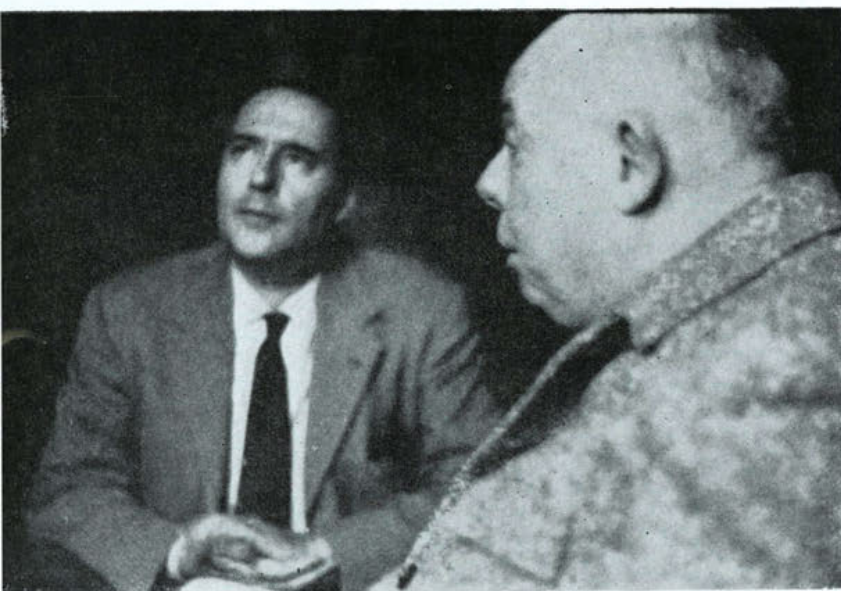
RENOIR: I don't know yet. I'll probably try it out with an ordinary cinema audience. I think that television now has sufficient importance for the public to accept films 'presented' in a different way. I mean that the effects achieved are no longer entirely dependent on the will of the director and the cameraman—the camera can produce effects almost by chance, as sometimes happens when you get a wonderful newsreel shot.

BAZIN: But doesn't television present a classic problem in technique—that of the quality and small size of the image? The Americans seem to lay down certain rules in shooting, the main actors have to remain inside a sort of square in order to keep the action always in the picture. . . . Do all these restrictions of the medium frighten you at all?

RENOIR: No, because the method I'd like to adopt will be something between the American and the French approach. I believe that if one follows the American TV technique, one risks making a film which it will be difficult for audiences to accept on the screen. But by adapting these techniques, one should be able to arrive at a new cinematographic style which could be extremely interesting. It all depends, I think, on the starting point, the conception.

I believe Roberto would agree with me that in the cinema at present the camera has become a sort of god. You have a camera, fixed on its tripod or crane, which is just like a heathen altar; about it are the high priests—the director, cameraman, assistants—who bring victims before the camera, like burnt offerings, and cast them into the flames. And the camera is there, immobile—or almost so—and when it does move it follows patterns ordained by the high priests, not by the victims.

Now, I am trying to extend my old ideas, and to establish that the camera finally has only one right—that of recording what happens. That's all. I don't want the movements of the actors to be determined by the camera, but the movements of the camera to be determined by the actor. This means working rather like a newsreel cameraman. When a newsreel cameraman films a race, for instance, he doesn't ask the runners to start from the exact spot that suits him. He has to manage things so that he can film the race wherever it happens. Or take an accident, a fire. It is the cameraman's duty to make it possible for us to see a spectacle, rather than the duty of the



Photograph by Jean Herman.

spectacle to take place for the benefit of the camera.

ROSSELLINI: I think what Renoir has just said brings out the real problem of film and television. In practice, there are, strictly speaking, hardly any really creative artists in the cinema: there has been a variety of artists who come together, pool their ideas, then translate and record them on film. And the actual filming itself is very often secondary. The real creative artist in the cinema is someone who can get the most out of everything he sees—even if he sometimes does this by accident.

RENOIR: That's the point. The creator of a film isn't at all an organiser; he isn't like a man who decides, for instance, how a funeral should be conducted. He is rather the man who finds himself watching a funeral he never expected to see, and sees the corpse, instead of lying in its coffin, getting up to dance, sees the relations, instead of weeping, running about all over the place. It's for him, and his colleagues, to capture this and then, in the cutting room, to make a work of art out of it.

ROSSELLINI: Not only in the cutting room. Because I don't know whether, today, *montage* is so essential. I believe we should begin to look at the cinema in a new way, and to start with abandon all the old myths. The cinema at first was a technical discovery; and everything, even editing, was subordinated to that. Then, in the silent cinema, *montage* had a precise meaning, because it represented language. From the silent cinema we have inherited this myth of *montage*, though it has lost most of its meaning. Consequently, it is in the images themselves that the creative artist can really bring his own observation to bear, his own moral view, his particular vision.

RENOIR: Yes: when I spoke of editing I was using a convenient phrase. I should, rather, have talked of choice . . . rather like Cartier Bresson choosing three pictures out of the hundred he's taken of some incident, and those three are the best.

BAZIN: Television is still rather frowned on—particularly by the intellectuals. How did you come to it?

RENOIR: Through being immensely bored by a great number of contemporary films, and being less bored by certain television programmes. I ought to say that the television shows I've found most exciting have been certain interviews on American TV. I feel that the interview gives the television close-up a meaning which is rarely achieved in the cinema. The close-up in the cinema is essentially a reconstruction, something prefabricated, carefully worked up—and, of course, this has yielded some great moments in the cinema.

This said, I believe that in thirty years we have rather used up this type of cinema and that we should perhaps move on to something else. In America I've seen some exceptional television shows. Not because the people working there have more talent than in France or anywhere else, but simply because, in a town like Los Angeles, there are ten channels operating constantly. In these circumstances, obviously, one has the chance of finding remarkable things. . . .

I remember, for instance, certain interviews in connection with some political hearing. Here, suddenly, we had a huge close-up, a picture of a human being in his entirety. One man was afraid, and all his fear showed; another was insolent, insulted the questioner; another was ironical; another took it all very lightly. In two minutes we could read the faces of these people: we knew who they were. I found this tremendously exciting . . . and somehow an indecent spectacle to watch. Yet this indecency came nearer the knowledge of man than many films.

ROSSELLINI: In modern society, men have an enormous need to know each other. Modern society and modern art have been destructive of man; but television is an aid to his rediscovery. Television, an art without traditions, dares to go out to look for man.

BAZIN: There was a stage when the cinema appeared to be doing the same—particularly at the time of the great documentaries, of Flaherty.

ROSSELLINI: Very few people were looking for man, and a great many were doing everything necessary for him to be forgotten. . . . But we should benefit from the new freedom television gives us. The television audience is quite different from that of the cinema. In television you're talking not to the mass public but to ten million individuals; and the discussion becomes much more intimate, more persuasive. You know how many setbacks I've had in my cinema career . . . well, I realised that the films which were the most complete failures with the public were just those which, in a little projection theatre before a dozen people, pleased the most.

RENOIR: I can confirm that. If we were to have a competition of failures, I'm not sure which of us would win.

ROSSELLINI: I'd win; I'd beat you by a long way . . .

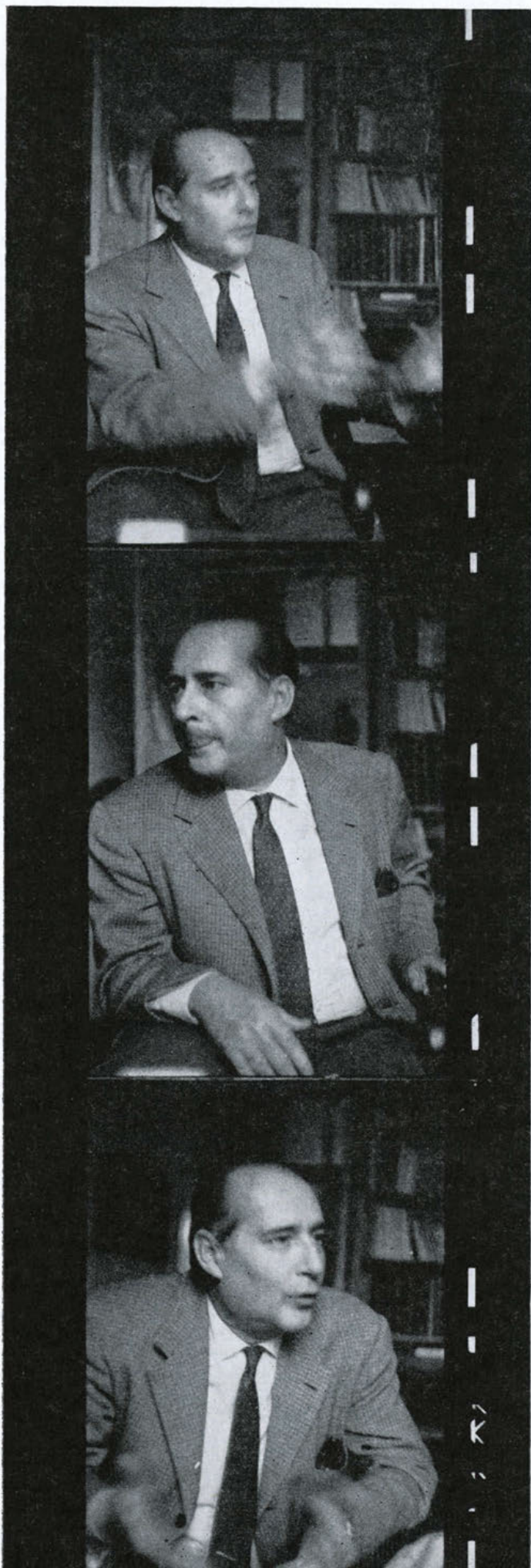
RENOIR: I'm not sure. I have the advantage of age . . . Be that as it may, take the example of my film *The Diary of a Chambermaid*. It was very badly received, mainly because of its title. People expected to laugh their heads off at a film with Paulette Goddard called *Diary of a Chambermaid*; they didn't, and they were dissatisfied. In the early days of television a TV company bought this film and it is still watched with admiration by enthusiasts. Thanks to television I've made a great deal of money out of it. I thought that I'd made a cinema film; and in fact, without realising it, I'd made one for television.

ROSSELLINI: I had an interesting experience with *La Voix Humaine*. I wanted to establish the film's capacity to penetrate to the very roots of a character. Now, with television, one rediscovers these feelings.

BAZIN: If cinema audiences at first looked to films for something richer than television could give them, perhaps now, accustomed to the limitations of television, they are ready to take something simpler from the cinema again. This might mean a reconsideration of the conditions of film production.

RENOIR: At present, if a film's to be sure of a sale in the French market, it has to be a co-production. To be sold abroad, it has to consider the tastes of different audiences, and one ends up by making films which lose all their national character. But the curious thing is that national character is what attracts international audiences. So the cinema is in danger of losing both its individuality and its market.

BAZIN: So the answer, as you see it, is that films should be



able to recover their costs in the home market, and should in consequence be made more cheaply?

RENOIR: Exactly. For instance, I hawked the script of *La Grande Illusion* around all the film companies for three years and no-one would touch it. But at that time they did not have the excuse of not wanting to take risks since films were paying their way. *La Grande Illusion*, for instance, had recovered its costs after its run at the Marivaux Cinema in Paris. Money was easier to come by and one could afford to experiment. The trouble about the present cost of films is that you either have a sensational success or you lose a lot of money. As a result producers play safe, and when one plays safe art is no longer possible.

ROSSELLINI: I think the mistake of European producers is in trying to follow the American pattern without realising that the whole basis of American production is completely different from our own . . . But there may be other reasons of a moral, or even a strictly political, nature. All the mass culture media have had an enormous success; and in profiting from this public appetite the people feeding it have supplied a false culture, simply in order to condition the masses in the way which best suited certain great powers.

RENOIR: I'm not so sure of that . . . I have a sort of faith in the immense stupidity of the men who run gigantic enterprises. I believe that they are always naive children, rushing headlong towards what looks as though it ought to bring them money. I believe that the word 'commercial' haunts them, and provided they bring out a product which is theoretically commercial they are quite happy. The word, in the cinema, means a film which has no daring, which corresponds to certain preconceived ideas. A commercial film isn't necessarily one that makes money . . .

ROSSELLINI: You once said to me that the commercial label went to the film whose aesthetic ideal was that wanted by the producer.

RENOIR: Just that: and this ideal doesn't, I think, derive from anything more than the practice of a naive, incomprehensible religion—and one which even works against their own interests. I don't believe that the producers are powerful enough, or cunning enough, to be Talleyrands trying to remould the world in their own image.

For instance, for film production to continue as at present, it needs a well-organised, stable society. It is in the interests of the producers to maintain a certain standard of morality, since if they don't do this immoral films won't sell. But at the moment we're rushing headlong towards the production of films which undermine all the accepted rules for social survival. If you like to see Mme. Brigitte Bardot making love simultaneously with her lover and her maid, it's because you think this is prohibited. But too many films like this will make people think this is normal. Well, these people are going to ruin themselves . . .

ROSSELLINI: Yes, the producers have ended up by creating ersatz substitutes for human emotions. Love, passion, tragedy—all emotions are deformed.

RENOIR: During the hundred years of romanticism, it was possible to score a great theatrical success by relying on the fact that the daughter of a workman couldn't marry the son of a duke. And this was because people believed in social differences. Society, by maintaining its faith in social divisions, also maintained the conditions in which such drama could succeed . . . Each work of art contains a little morsel of protest. But if this protest turns into destruction, if the system blows up, the possibility of such drama at once vanishes. This is what is happening now. We have got to the stage of little amorous reunions such as I mentioned. The next time, I suppose, father will be one of the three, making love to the girl. Then it will be mother . . . And what comes after that? The moment will come when no one knows how to outbid the last player.

I am sure that the great quality of the early American films sprang from an American puritanism which put up barriers to American passions. When we saw Lillian Gish, who was probably going to be assaulted by the villain, we trembled . . . it meant something. Today, what can you do with the rape of a girl who has already made love to the entire town?

ROSSELLINI: In the last analysis, people instinctively construct the society they desire.

RENOIR: Absolutely. Certain restrictions are extremely useful for artistic expression, and though it sounds a paradox, absolute freedom doesn't permit absolute artistic expression. We can only hope that people will reconstruct the barriers, as they did for instance in painting. Cubism, after all, was nothing but a deliberate constraint adopted after the exaggerated and destructive freedoms of post-impressionism . . .

BAZIN: You both seem to approach television in different ways. You, M. Renoir, are again looking for that *commedia dell' arte* spirit which always attracts you; and you, M. Rossellini, seem to be returning to the interests which made you the originator of Italian neo-realism.

ROSSELLINI: Someone—I've forgotten who—said that we are living in an era of barbarian invasions. We're also living at a time when man's knowledge is becoming ever deeper, but when every man is a specialist. This disturbs me, and I'm returning to documentary because I want to hold people up to people. I would like to escape from this rigid specialisation and return to the broader knowledge which makes it possible to achieve a synthesis . . . because that, after all, is what matters.

BAZIN: You made *India 58* and the documentaries for television at the same time. Do you think the documentaries influenced the other film?

ROSSELLINI: In the documentaries I was exploring a precise world, and in the film I tried to summarise my experience of it. The two things complement each other.

RENOIR: I can define Roberto's position and my own: Roberto is continuing the pure French tradition—of investigating humanity: I try to be Italian and rediscover the *commedia dell' arte*.

ROSSELLINI: I'm striving to set moving a variety of enterprises, not just a single film; if you produce a range of work, you can, in a way, help towards forming public taste. It's very difficult for me to find a screen subject at present: there are no more heroes in life, only miniature heroisms, and I don't know where to look for a story . . . What I am trying to do is a piece of research, a documentation, on the state of man today all over the world. And as I find dramatic subjects, exalting heroes, I may move towards a fiction film. But the first stage is the research, the observation, and this has got to be systematic. Think of everything there is in the world—all the folk music, the needs of radio, of the record industry. You can find heaps of things—in Peru, Mexico, Haiti—that will pay for the enterprise without tying you up in big capital expenditure.

RENOIR: I think there is another reason for our interest in television, Roberto. It may be because the importance of technique in the cinema has vanished during the last few years. When I began in films, you had to know your trade thoroughly, to have all your technical skill at your fingertips. We didn't know, for instance, how to make a dissolve in the laboratory, and because you had to do it in the camera you had to be absolutely clear in your own mind about when you wanted the scene to end . . . Nowadays a director would waste time on the floor if he concerned himself with technical problems. He becomes something much closer to a theatrical than a literary author.



Left: Roberto Rossellini. Right: Jean Renoir.
Photographs by Jean Herman.

The Bayeux Tapestry is more beautiful than the modern Gobelins tapestry. Why? Because Queen Mathilda had to say to herself: 'I haven't any red, I'll have to use brown; I haven't any blue, I must use some colour like blue . . .'. Obligated to make use of crude contrasts, constantly struggling against imperfections, her technical difficulties helped her to create great art. If the job is technically easy, that spur to creation does not exist; and at the same time the artist is free to apply his invention to different forms. Today, in fact, if I conceive a story for the cinema, that story would do just as well for the stage, or for a book, or for television . . .

All the industrial arts (and, after all, the cinema is simply an industrial art) have been great at the beginning and have been debased as they perfected themselves. It's the same thing, for instance, in pottery. I did some work in ceramics myself, trying to rediscover the technical simplicity of the early days, and the best I could manage was a false 'primitivism' since I deliberately rejected all the developments of the

potter's technique. Instead I plunged into a genuinely primitive trade: the cinema.

But the cinema is moving the same way. The people who made those fine early American or German or Swedish films weren't all great artists—some were very indifferent ones—but all their pictures were beautiful. Why? Because the technique was difficult . . . In France, after the splendid first period, after Méliès and Max Linder, films became worthless. Why? Because we were intellectuals trying to make 'art' films, to produce masterpieces. In fact, the moment one can allow oneself to become an intellectual instead of an artisan, one is falling into danger. And if you and I, Roberto, are turning towards television, it is because television is in a technically primitive state which may restore to artists that fighting spirit of the early cinema, when everything that was made was good.

Original French text edited by André Bazin, Jean Herman and Claude Choublier.

ANDRÉ BAZIN

WITH THE DEATH OF André Bazin on November 11th, 1958, at the age of 40, after a long illness which in no way impaired his intellectual energies, France was deprived of her most significant critic of the post-war generation.

André Bazin came to film criticism by way of his collaboration with *Travail et Culture*, a semi-official body concerned with cultural activities amongst working class people. He took part in the organisation of innumerable film shows for students and the general public. Meanwhile he was contributing articles to several papers and magazines—*France-Observateur*, *Esprit*, *L'Ecran Français*, *La Revue du Cinéma*—and in particular to *Les Cahiers du Cinéma*, of which he eventually became editor-in-chief. A graduate accustomed to the rigours of scientific analysis, he brought to the study of films a mind of unrelenting objectivity, going about his work very much in the manner of a geologist or zoologist in front of his microscope.

Politically he belonged to the left and he was also a practising Catholic, but as a critic he was always more concerned with film aesthetics than with the expression of his own political or religious beliefs. His thought worked on dialectical lines, strongly influenced by the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre. Without forgetting the special quality of cinema as an art, he never lost sight of the value of film as a social document, and was very much aware that the cinema reflects its times—not like a mere carbon copy, but more like an X-ray, penetrating the surface of reality, and bringing out the pattern that lies beneath. Using only fair or even

mediocre works as a starting point—*The Battle of Stalingrad*, *The Fall of Berlin*, *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*—Bazin could write exemplary criticism about the insights they provided into the less familiar aspects of the Soviet and American ways of thinking; his long essay—*Le Mythe de Staline*—which appeared in *Esprit* in the summer of 1950, acquired a prophetic note in the light of Khrushchev's famous secret report; Darryl F. Zanuck's lengthy and tedious super-production provided the occasion for a devastating analysis of the American obsession with success at any price in modern society.

Perhaps the greatest contribution André Bazin made to the aesthetics of film criticism was his concern with the part played in the development of modern cinema by the use of deep-focus photography (as exemplified in films like Welles' *Citizen Kane* and Wyler's *The Little Foxes*) and its logical extension—the long take with the camera held stationary. He also felt the cinema must give a special significance to the most trivial happenings of our daily life, must dignify the mundane, the banal, concentrating on them not for their sentimental value, but as essential parts of a unified and indissoluble whole. Hence Bazin's admiration for Italian neo-realism and its chief exponent, Cesare Zavattini, as representing the non-theatrical cinema, and for his American counterpart, Paddy Chayevsky.

When he died, André Bazin had embarked on a huge critical survey of the career of Jean Renoir, which would have been his most ambitious work to date, and which he left unfinished. The collected edition of his articles will soon appear, however, and will finally establish the importance of a career without equal in the world of contemporary French cinema. Bazin by-passed the romantic point of view of Canudo and Delluc, and confirmed the right of the cinema to be treated as a major art, and a fit subject of study by the best minds of our time. Widely recognised and admired, not only in France, but in Spain, Portugal, and Latin America, his work has so far scarcely reached an Anglo-Saxon public. This omission should be made good as quickly as possible for the greater benefit of all film-makers and film lovers of the English speaking world.

LOUIS MARCORELLES.



Jules Dassin, André Bazin, Jacques Flaud and Robert Bresson.

two new directors

Innovation in the cinema takes a variety of forms. In England and France two young directors, each with a single short film behind him, have recently completed their first features, made under very different conditions. *Look Back in Anger*, directed by Tony Richardson, is a studio production financed by a major company; *Paris nous Appartient*, directed by Jacques Rivette, is a co-operative venture on the part of the people concerned, made quite outside the commercial system. Both films are concerned with youth in society.



"Look Back in Anger": Richard Burton and Mary Ure.

Look Back in Anger

PENELOPE HOUSTON

ALL STUDIO LOTS look pretty much alike—part incomplete, like an active building site, part derelict, as though no-one had quite finished clearing up the damage after an air-raid. The background of coal heaps, piles of timber, casually parked cars, rubble left over from forgotten films, conveys an enormous air of impermanence; across the street may be the solid houses of suburbia, but on its own side of the road the film unit seems to have pitched camp on the edge

of nowhere. As a setting for *Look Back in Anger*, this background of the A.B.P.C. studio at Elstree looked not inappropriate: industrial drabness, a few defiant flashes of colour, and outside the secure fortresses of suburbia. In a corner of the lot, a cheerful little street market had been rigged up—three or four rows of booths, including Jimmy Porter's sweet stall, against a background of shop fronts. Our visit came towards the end of shooting. The director, Tony Richardson, had for a week been filming on this set, technically on location though actually within the boundaries of the studio.

In filming, *Look Back in Anger* has moved extensively

among real locations. Approximately half of the eight week shooting schedule has been spent outside the studio, including sequences in a cemetery at Kensal Rise, a disused railway junction at Dalston, a street market in Romford. Here and there, some intriguing echoes arise. The band in the jazz club sequence is that of Chris Barber, which played in *Mamma Don't Allow*, directed by Tony Richardson and Karel Reisz; the little band which wanders through the market was seen also in *Every Day Except Christmas*. In the material shot at Romford, to be intercut with the studio scenes, the cameraman, Ozzie Morris, has returned to the hidden camera technique which he used so effectively in some of the London street scenes of *Knave of Hearts*.

Obviously, a play as enclosed and concentrated as this one cannot be so extensively transferred to the open air without some risk of losing grip and control. But the attempt is to merge the real and the atmospheric; to make, obviously, a film rather than a filmed play. Much of the camera style is apparently designed to redress the balance. It aims, Ozzie Morris told us, at the intensely intimate, with some emphasis on extreme close-up. The result should, he said, be rather harsher than his last British picture, *The Key*—"rugged and beautiful, I hope." Morris, who has now photographed five pictures for John Huston, is perhaps best known for the colour experiments of *Moulin Rouge* and *Moby Dick*. One tends to forget that in *Knave of Hearts* he and René Clément probably went further than anyone else in making everyday London a poetic background for a black-and-white feature. And it's encouraging to hear that the exteriors of *Look Back in Anger* have mainly been shot in normal daylight. Although Morris in general prefers the 'impact' of CinemaScope to the conventional screen, he clearly believes that this essentially black-and-white, non-CinemaScope subject affords its own chances for experiment.

About the whole production, of course, there's a certain atmosphere of innovation. A good deal of rumour and negotiation preceded the final decision to make the film. Several British studios were said to be interested; then came the report that an American company had acquired the rights and were even considering making the picture in the States. Now, with the exception of Harry Salzmann, the executive producer, the talent involved is all British, though there may be an element of international insurance in the casting of Richard Burton and Claire Bloom, players with reputations at least as high overseas as here. In any case *Look Back in Anger* is not noticeably a low budget venture (probable cost: about £250,000), although its director has only the screen experience of a single short behind him and its subject—however sensational its stage success—is not precisely run of the mill for the British cinema. Richard Burton told us that there was relatively little preliminary rehearsal and that some of the technicians first encountered the play when they heard Jimmy Porter rounding ferociously on his wife Alison (Mary Ure). Their reaction, apparently, was startled, wary and admiring. If Jimmy Porter represented a new voice in the theatre, he could mean at least as much to our cautious screen.

For Tony Richardson, this must all represent a particularly challenging start to a screen career: a lot of people had backed *Look Back in Anger* as a winner before it even went on the floor, and a lot more will be watching the omens. He hasn't, he said, found much difficulty in adjusting his own original views about the staging of the play to the demands of the new medium, or the extensions of the action in Nigel Kneale's script. After his run of productions at the Royal Court, he is approaching the cinema not as Peter Brook did with *The Beggar's Opera*, a stage director making an isolated sortie into new territory, but as someone ready to prefer the screen to the stage. He finds it, he says, more free, more open to the imagination, more stimulating for a director—and the screen's restrictions as far as choice of subject goes don't particularly alarm him. With his first feature completed,

he plans—after a Stratford *Othello*—a return to filming with John Osborne's *The Entertainer*, then perhaps a project for Hecht-Hill-Lancaster.

* * *

In a corner behind the little street market was tucked away a row of chairs, traditionally painted with the names of the director and stars. No-one, on the day we visited the set, went anywhere near them. It was an active day made up of bits and pieces—the time, Richard Burton said, when film-making becomes tedious, when "an actor begins to feel like an extra." The main action had been completed and the details were being filled in, inevitably with a good deal of hanging about between set ups. This filling-in apart, the film has been shot quite largely in continuity, an obvious advantage for a player such as Mary Ure, repeating her stage performance.

For one brief episode, the camera was mounted on a rostrum seven or eight feet high. The shot began on a fading poster (put up new, then laboriously tattered and dirtied) for the play in which Helena Charles (Claire Bloom) has been appearing; then the camera panned round as Burton and Gary Raymond pushed their market barrow down a little slope and around a corner. Setting up the scene took an hour or so: cabbage and cauliflower stalks were strewn along the path, a few dustbin lids scattered around, a couple of stout dogs posed by a market stall, extras instructed how to walk across the scene. Rounding the corner the first time, Burton and Raymond steered their barrow the wrong way and brought it up with a jolt against the rostrum, then righted it and repeated the action. A cat was imported at the last minute by Tony Richardson, strategically placed to run across in front of the barrow. The cat, somehow, brought the rather lack-lustre winter afternoon scene to life: everyone brightened noticeably as it made its reluctant entrance.

Then back to the market itself. Here the main scene shot during the day was one interpolated into the film version, in which Jimmy Porter and his partner befriend from their sweet stall an Indian trader in danger of being thrown out of the market. Out of context, this inevitably seems a little *voulu*, as though colour prejudice was being brought into the film as the fashionable topic. Only the Indian's arm appeared in the shot, as Burton, Raymond, the market inspector (Donald Pleasence) and a dissatisfied customer (Anne Blake) argued in front of his stall. The Indian, one of several non-professionals in the film, confidently made his own venture into direction, telling Donald Pleasence to raise his arm so that the paper he was holding would be in camera range. The distinctly realistic crowd of market-place loiterers included several people from the Romford location, among them a gipsyish man with a single ear-ring, a magazine turned back to a story called 'Con Man' stuck in his pocket, and a sceptical, professional eye for details of the screen market.

Later, the lights were switched on, the street traders began to pack up. Burton, relieving his impatience, picked a child's ball off one of the stalls and kicked it clean over the walls surrounding the set. Again, the assistant director marshalled his forces and yelled for silence; again director and cameraman consulted. Burton and Claire Bloom walked slowly down the little alley under the lights, and another shot and another line or two of dialogue were completed.

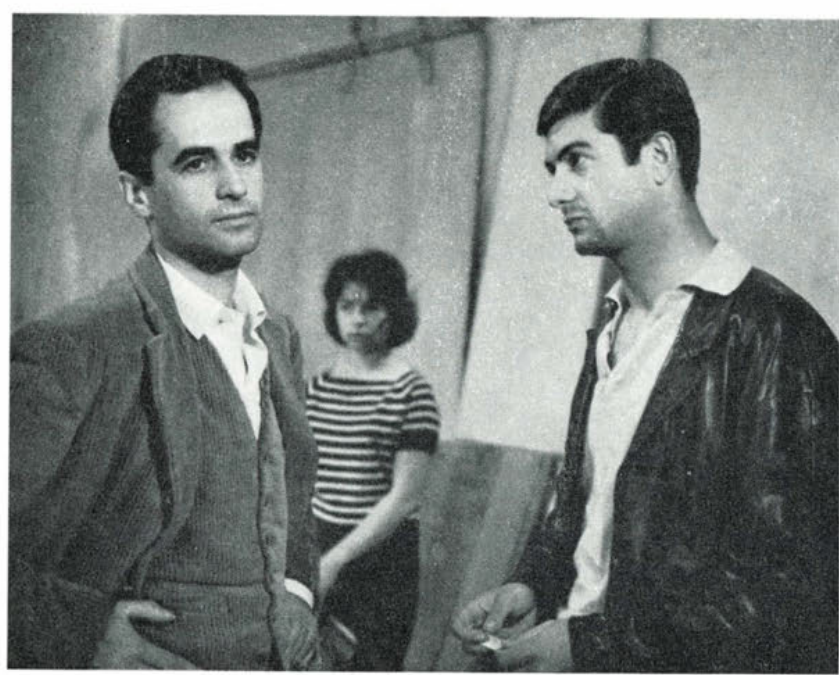
At the finish of the picture, there would be the usual dispersal: Claire Bloom to New York, to appear in a play based, of all things, on *Rashomon*; Richard Burton either to Mexico, for a Western directed by John Huston, or to the Mediterranean, to work with Michael Cacoyannis; Tony Richardson to Stratford, for *Othello*. There is a spectacular internationalism and impermanence about the cinema these days; but for the British industry it is still a matter of discovering this country for the feature cinema, of making contact. We can do with a few Jimmy Porters on the screen.



ABOVE: Tony Richardson, with Edith Evans, on location at a London cemetery. Dame Edith's part, of Ma Tanner, has been written in for the screen version of "Look Back in Anger".



LEFT: Jacques Rivette (centre, with script) during the shooting of "Paris nous Appartient". Standing: Daniel Croheim and Betty Schneider.



"Paris nous Appartient": Gianni Esposito, Betty Schneider and Jean Claude Brialy.

Paris nous Appartient

LOUIS MARCORELLES

PARIS HAS SERVED as a backcloth for all sorts of pictures—for love stories, gangster films and travelogues; for Cinerama. Today it is the setting for a modest but at the same time highly ambitious first feature from one of the young talents of the French cinema, Jacques Rivette. His age: 30; his profession: has seen all films, especially American ones. With François Truffaut, he is the most characteristic representative of *Cahiers du Cinéma's* young team of critics.

Two years ago Rivette made a short story film, *Le Coup du Berger*, with young professional actors. The title indicates the character of the film: a game, a hoax. A young married woman, intending to deceive her husband and bring home a mink coat given her by her lover, is caught in her own trap; the husband, less simple than she imagined, arranges that the famous mink ends up on the shoulders of his charming sister-in-law. Rivette developed this anecdote with icy elegance, a lordly detachment, and extreme visual formalism. The producer of the film was Claude Chabrol (director of *Le Beau Serge*), who lent his own flat during shooting.

With *Paris nous Appartient*, Jacques Rivette has embarked on a feature production, undertaken in rather special conditions. The title is inspired by a reflection of the writer Charles Péguy—that Paris belongs to those who spend the summer there preparing for the winter season. A troupe of young actors, directed by Gianni Esposito, profit by the summer to work on a new production, Shakespeare's *Pericles*, without money and against professional advice. A young student (played by Betty Schneider) joins them. But difficulties spring up, enthusiasm crumbles, intrigues proliferate, and little by little the group falls apart. They all imagine themselves to be victims of a secret conspiracy, to which the silent, empty Paris of August lends its disquieting face. Involved with the troupe are *émigrés* of all kinds—Russians, Spaniards, a young French-American woman, an American intellectual in flight from McCarthyism. The film ends tragically, with several deaths including the suicide of the young director, who might have been saved by the girl's love. The script itself is by Rivette and the actor Jean Gruault, and most of the actors are professionals. Betty

Schneider, for instance, appeared in Alex Joffe's *Les Fanatiques* and in *Mon Oncle*; Gianni Esposito played in Renoir's *French Cancan*. Others in the cast include Tatiana Moukhine and François Maistre, both well-known in the Paris *avant-garde* theatres, and Jean Claude Brialy, the young leading actor of *Le Beau Serge*. The cameraman is Charles Bitsch, another young French critic. No-one, incidentally, will receive any payment until after the film is shown.

Shooting, which began at the end of July, was completed in November. The locations cover the places frequented by young intellectuals—Pont des Arts, Saint-Sulpice, university restaurants, a café near the Etoile. Interiors have been filmed mostly in hotel rooms, rented when necessary, and at the Théâtre du Châtelet. The shooting script was planned to leave room for improvisation during filming and consisted only of a breakdown into scenes and dialogue. Rivette says, however, that a good deal of the dialogue was rewritten during shooting, with improvisation from the actors.

Of necessity, no dialogue was recorded on the set and the film will be entirely post-synchronised. This, according to Rivette, leaves a certain area of freedom and allows him to pick up any mistakes. "In some respects," Rivette adds, "my film will be in the spirit of 16mm. production. I know that it will please only one person in ten. But I haven't made it with any provocative intention . . . I believe that the basic material of the plot is infinitely malleable, and I'd be prepared—if absolutely necessary—to make compromises here rather than in anything concerning the characters. I had first written an original subject for Roberto Rossellini—a sort of modern *Antigone*, set in the Cité Universitaire among the student population and dealing also with racial tensions. This couldn't be filmed, and although I've entirely reworked the subject in my new script I have kept two or three scenes and characters, such as the young girl and the American exile."

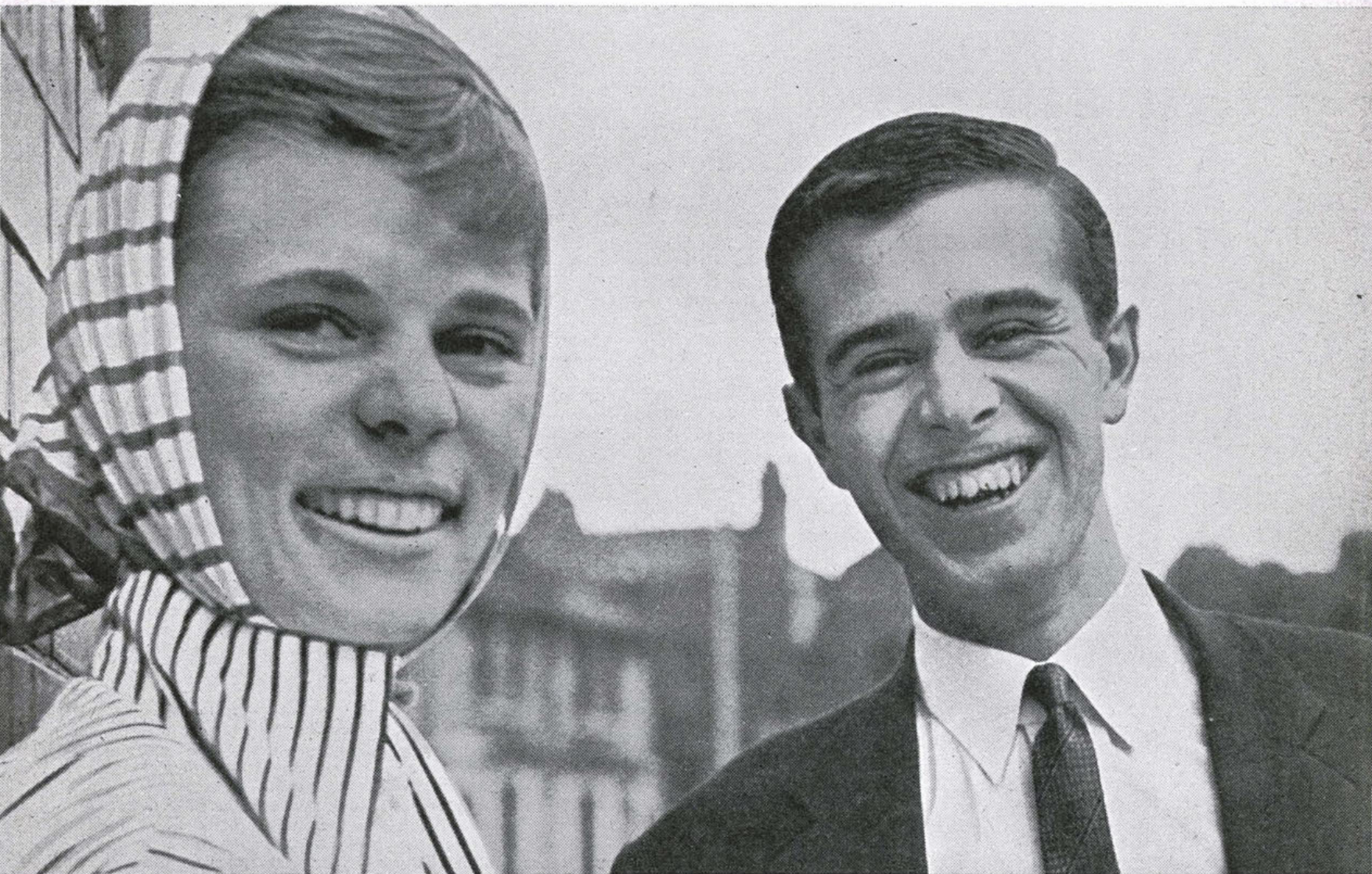
The characters in his film, Rivette claims, "are all tragic puppets, taking themselves too seriously, living in a sort of dream world and sickened by the real world, which they can't reform." His idea was "to show Paris as a melting-pot, a meeting-point for different people, races, ideas. No producer was prepared to touch the subject, and in filming it we've worked together as friends. The stock has been bought from day to day, with help from *Cahiers du Cinéma*, François Truffaut, my own family; the camera was borrowed from Claude Chabrol. Now we still have the big job of synchronisation, all the heavy expenses of the laboratory . . ." Rivette's own interest in the cinema dates, he says, from about twelve years ago, when he read Cocteau's diary of the shooting of *La Belle et La Bête*. Directors he particularly admires are Orson Welles ("for his ability to jump across time and space") and Jean Renoir ("for his art of blending characters"). "Today," Rivette adds, "the French cinema has come to a turning point. Before the war only Renoir, Vigo and Gance had created an authentic French cinema. At present one can think of six or seven talents whose films demand serious consideration . . ."

Jacques Rivette himself is typical of a new generation with a new conception of the cinema. He will succeed or not according to whether his intransigent idealism can adapt itself to the material circumstances of this most terrible of the arts. "The renewal of the French cinema," wrote his friend François Truffaut, "cannot be brought about through the promotion of assistant directors who have become bored, resigned, domesticated . . . but through the arrival of young intellectuals who feel themselves artists and not artisans . . . directors such as Louis Malle, Claude Chabrol, Jacques Baratier, Alain Resnais, Agnès Varda." Now Jacques Rivette and Claude Chabrol have each made a feature film, Alain Resnais has just made his own first full-length picture, in Japan, and François Truffaut is himself preparing a feature, *Les Quatre Cent Coups*. A new idea of the cinema does indeed seem to be growing in France.

NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

March 18th—22nd

the LAST Free Cinema



FRANK HERRMANN

Have any of the National Film Theatre programmes over the past few years made a mark like those of FREE CINEMA? We doubt it.

For these have been something more than mere interesting compilations of new documentaries. They have represented the birth, and the growth, of the only really creative movement of British cinema since the war. And this movement has been an important part of the cultural renaissance of the last three years—the years of the Royal Court Theatre, of the Universities and Left Review and *The Uses of Literacy*; of *Declaration* and Aldermaston and the Angry Young Men. Now here is FREE CINEMA SIX.

Candid exploration of contemporary Britain has been an important part of this tradition, and the main feature of our sixth programme will be a new film by Karel Reisz which gives an exciting, intimate and highly significant picture of the world of young working people today. In addition we are particularly delighted to be showing films by fresh outlaw groups; one working in the railway sheds of Manchester, and another, under a young Hungarian emigré director, in the streets of London. Further items at present being planned will include at least one surprise packet.

There is a particular reason, by the way, for coming to FREE CINEMA SIX—if you like to be in on historic deaths. For this brings us to the end of it. This is the LAST FREE CINEMA.

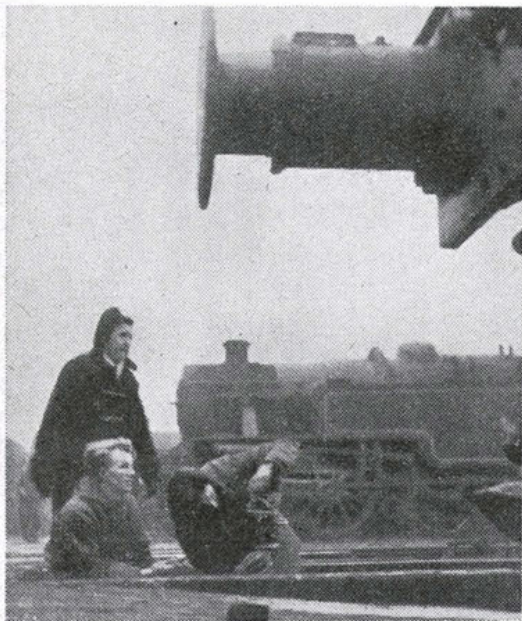
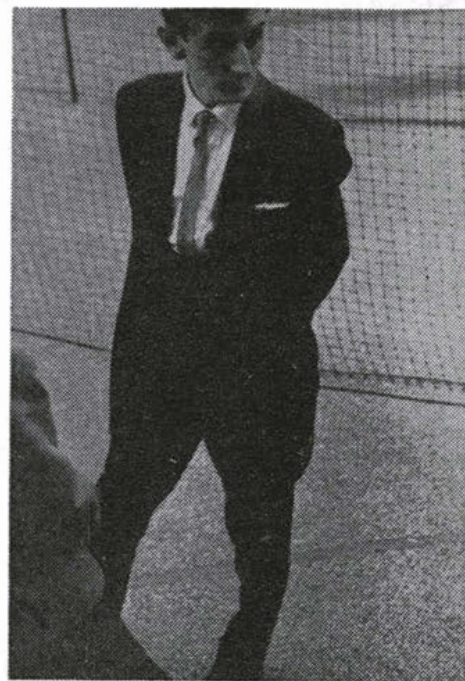
The Free Cinema movement has been the most controversial development in British film-making since the war. The London members of the Free Cinema group who have put on the previous shows at the National Film Theatre now feel that the time has come for the series to come to an end. The Institute has invited them to mount this last programme.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE.

the LAST Free Cinema

WE ARE THE LAMBETH BOYS

A Youth Club in Lambeth—a cast of young Londoners between fourteen and seventeen—the way they live and think and talk (about clothes, the death penalty, the H-bomb)—their amusement, their work, their hopes and convictions. Evenings at the fish and chip shop; Saturday jive; a summer jaunt to play cricket with their Public School patrons. This is the stuff of Karel Reisz's new film, shot by Walter Lassally and recorded by John Fletcher, with music by Johnny Dankworth. A great deal is written and spoken about the problems of youth to-day, too often by people who have little direct experience of what they are talking about, and even less sympathy. Here is a picture to set them right. Made in the closest contact and co-operation with the boys and girls of the club, it presents, we believe, a completely vivid and authentic view of young working people to-day. To the layman and sociologist it is absorbing; to the politicians we hope it will be dynamite. *We Are the Lambeth Boys* is produced by Leon Clore and Robert Adams and will be shown by kind permission of the Ford Motor Company; it is the second in their series *Look at Britain*, and, like *Every Day Except Christmas* an outstanding example of imaginative progressive sponsorship.



ENGINEMEN

Directed by Michael Grigsby. Unit 57. B.F.I. Experimental Fund.

British Railways always seem to be in the news — and generally the image of its railwaymen presented by TV and journalism is a deliberately unfavourable one. Yet how much chance do we ever get of first-hand knowledge of *their* problems, *their* attitudes, *their* feeling for the future? Here is a film which shows a group of men in a locomotive shed at work and at leisure, which lets them speak for themselves and conveys their deep feeling for their work. It is the first film of Unit 57, a group of young TV technicians in Manchester escaping from their daily chores of wheeling camera dollies in and out of quiz shows. *Enginemen* shows that the true spirit of poetic documentary is not dead in Britain—outside the establishment.

REFUGE ENGLAND

Directed by Robert Vas. Camera Walter Lassally. With Tibor Molnar. B.F.I. Experimental Fund.

The first work of Robert Vas, a young Hungarian script writer now living in London. This is a film from the heart. A refugee arrives alone in London and spends the first day searching for lodgings. Abruptly transplanted from a very different soil, he gathers his first violent impressions of the country which will now be his home. Bewildered, affectionate and ironic in turn, *Refuge England* is at once a searching look at the face of London we take for granted, and a poetic expression of what it means to be a Displaced Person.



The British Film Institute
QUARTERLY GAZETTE
A Report on the Institute's Activities

No. 27

January, 1959

164 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2

FILMS FROM THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

The following films have been added to the Distribution Library
during the last three months.

	Reels Sd./St.	Gauge mm.	Running Time
ART AND HISTORY OF THE FILM			
Coney Island, 1917 (Buster Keaton)	2 St.	16/35	28 mins.
Karnival Kid, The (Walt Disney)	1 Sd.	16/35	8 mins.
Pacific 231	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
People Like Maria (W.H.O. film)	5 Sd.	16	50 mins.
FILMS ON THE ARTS			
The Vision of William Blake	3 Sd.	16/35 Col.	30 mins.
FILMS MADE BY CHILDREN			
Nine to Four (made by King's College School, Wimbledon)	2 Sd.	16	18 mins.
STUDY EXTRACTS			
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn "A", U.S.A. 1939	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
Goodbye Mr. Chips "A", U.S.A. 1939	1 Sd.	16	11 mins.
Good Earth, The, "A", U.S.A. 1936	1 Sd.	16	11 mins.
The Maggie "A"	1 Sd.	16	9 mins.
Romeo and Juliet "A", U.S.A. 1936	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
Tale of Two Cities A, "A", U.S.A. 1936	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
Three David Lean Openings	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
FILMS MADE BY AMATEURS			
Exercise Movie (with tape recording)	1 St.	8/16	8 mins.
FILMS FOR FILM SOCIETIES			
Chairy Tales (Normal McLaren)	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
Nice Time (Transferred from Distribution Section)	2 Sd.	16	19 mins.
Pathar Panchali	12 Sd.	16	115 mins.
Toccata for Toy Trains (Charles Eames)	2 Sd.	16 Col.	15 mins.
The following film has been withdrawn:			
Nice Time	2 Sd.	35	19 mins.

LECTURE DATES

JANUARY, 1959

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Organiser</i>
5	4.00 p.m.	Birth of the Film	Charles Everett	R.A.F. Stanmore	London Services Ed. Committee
8	3.00 p.m.	Free Cinema	Paddy Whannel	Epsom Afternoon Townswomen's Guild	Epsom Afternoon Townswomen's Guild
12	4.00 p.m.	The Advent of Sound	Charles Everett	R.A.F. Stanmore	London Services Ed. Committee
13	7.15 p.m.	Free Cinema	Paddy Whannel	West Malling R.A.F.	Kent Education Committee for University of Oxford Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies
15	12.45 p.m.	The British Film Industry	Charles Everett	Acton Rotary Club	City of London Society
18	Not known yet	Comedy Films	Not yet settled	Oxford	City of Oxford Ed. Committee (Community Centre and Youth Service)
19	4.00 p.m.	Is Film an Art Form?	Charles Everett	R.A.F. Stanmore	London Services Ed. Committee
20	5.45 p.m.	Film Appreciation	Paddy Whannel	Folkestone	University of London Institute of Education
23	6.30 p.m.	Introduction to "The Wild One".	John Huntley	John Lewis, Oxford Street	John Lewis Partnership Social Club
25	3.00 p.m.	Film Censorship	John Trevelyan	National Film Theatre	British Film Institute
27	10.00 a.m.	The Future of the Cinema	Charles Everett	R.A.F. Uxbridge	London Services Ed. Committee
28	7.15 p.m.	Early Hitchcock Productions	Ivor Montagu	Farnborough R.A.E.	Farnborough R.A.E. Film Society

FEBRUARY 1959

2	8.00 p.m.	Film Comedy	Derek Eastaway	East Sheen	The Vernon Society
1	5.00 p.m.	The Work of Sergei Eisenstein	Marie Seton	Battle of Britain House, Northwood	University of London Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Organiser</i>
2		The Soviet Cinema	Ivor Montagu	Battle of Britain House, Northwood	University of London Dept. of Extra- Mural Studies
4	8.00 p.m.	The Cinema Industry	Charles Everett	Hatch End Young Conservatives	City of London Society
6		Films and the Teacher	Paddy Whannel	Eastbourne Training College	Eastbourne Training College
10	7.15 p.m.	Film Criticism	Paddy Whannel	West Malling R.A.F.	Kent Education Committee for Uni. of Oxford Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies
14/15	Weekend	The Sound Film 1945-58 and Prospects for the Future	John Huntley	Debden House	East Ham Ed. Committee
10	7.30 p.m.	The Place of the Cinema in Moulding Public Opinion	Mary Carver	Enfield	Enfield Highway Cooperative Society Education Dept.
17	7.30 p.m.	The Art of Living	Paddy Whannel	Enfield	Enfield Highway Co-operative Society Ed. Dept.
18		Writing Music for Films	Anthony Hopkins	Sheffield City Memorial Hall	Sheffield Film Society
18		Film Music	John Huntley	Emberbrook	Emberbrook Gramophone Company
19	7.30 p.m.	The Cartoon Film	John Halas	Evesham	Evesham Film Society

MARCH 1959

4	7.30 p.m.	Film Appreciation	Paddy Whannel	Hornsea, E. Yorks.	Institute of Further Ed., Hornsea
9	8.00 p.m.	Music in Films	John Hollingsworth	Westcliff-on-Sea	Southend-on-Sea Music Club
10	7.30 p.m.	The Cartoon Film	John Halas	Wilton Castle Yorks	Wilton Castle Club Film Group
17	3.45 p.m.	Films Since the War	Stanley Reed	East Ham Boys' Grammar School	East Ham Boys' Grammar School
17	6.30 p.m.	The Russian Cinema	Marie Seton	B.B.C. Television Studios	Colour Telecine, B.B.C. Television Studios

THE BOOK LIBRARY

The following are among the books recently added to the Library of the Institute. (Those marked with an asterisk are available for loan to members.)

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Film Reviews

WILD STRAWBERRIES

ANY FILM OF Ingmar Bergman is unmistakably the work of one mind, one intention, carried to its conclusion with severe assurance, and revealing almost as much about its maker as about its theme or characters. Bergman writes the script, as well as directing the film, and his work in the theatre gives him a special authority with his actors. Whether you like the sound of what he says or not, there is no mistaking the voice.

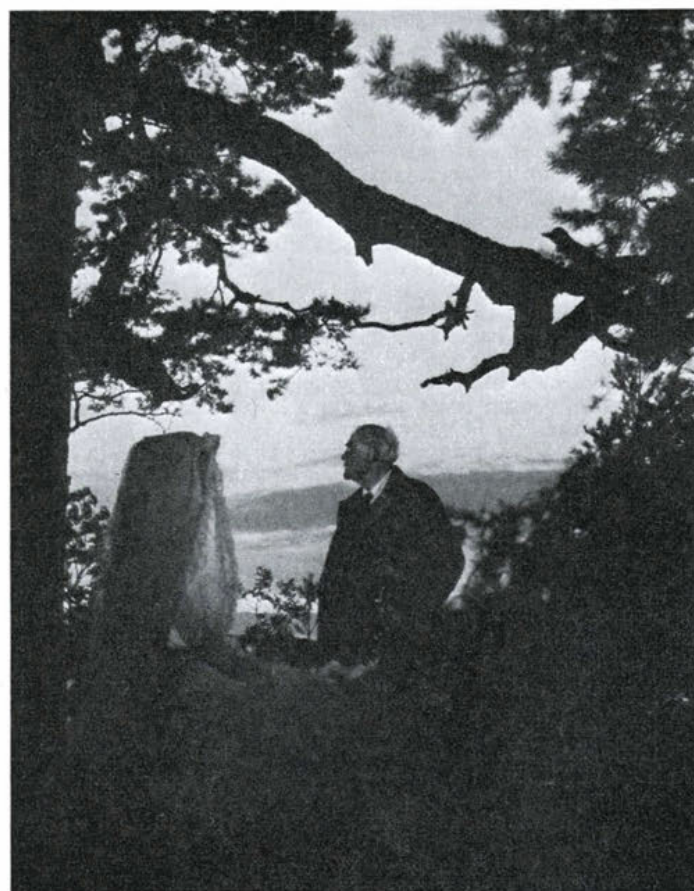
This is particularly true of *Wild Strawberries* (Contemporary), winner of the Grand Prix at Berlin in 1958. In many ways it is an entirely successful film, in the sense that one feels the director has completely realised his plans. There is no sign of a fumbled effect or a missed opportunity. He has done what he wanted to do.

But what *did* he want to do? In essence, the story is a simple account of dawning self-understanding. Professor Isak Borg, a distinguished old Doctor of Medicine, is invited by the University of Lund to come and receive an honorary degree. He is, on the surface, a pleasant enough old man, a little pedantic, a little tetchy with his housekeeper, but courtly and tolerant. The night before the degree-giving ceremony, he decides to drive to Lund by car instead of flying, the change of plans upsets his housekeeper and they have one of their minor quarrels. Passing a disturbed night, the Professor has a dream in which he sees himself as a corpse rising out of a shattered coffin to grasp his hand.

Death in life: the corpse beneath the living skin. That symbol, at least, is clear. And it recurs throughout the film, which follows the journey to Lund. His daughter-in-law, returning to her husband after a short separation (he did not want her baby—again the denial of life), tells Isak that he is cold, selfish, dead. Gradually, the Professor sees what she means. Dozing in the car, returning to the house where he spent summer holidays as a young man, scenes from the past swim back into his mind. He watches the girl he loved, who eventually married his elder brother, the break-up of his marriage when his wife, tortured by his remoteness and coldness, took a lover; there is a fantasy episode when he fails an examination in "humanity". And, running through the story, there is the counterpointed theme of the innocent, warm, spontaneous girl who, with her two boy friends, hitch-hikes a lift in his car.

So far, so good. Bergman carries his audience easily with him through these passages. Everything is meticulously in place. Even the clock without the hands—the familiar symbol from the psychiatrist's couch of a life without fulfilment—is cleverly, and consciously, introduced. But if the total effect is merely to present the tardy awakening of a selfish old man, then it would be no more than a laborious truism. The final few moments, beautifully filmed, of the tired old Professor, a little mellowed now, aware of his faults and so able to correct them, snuggling down to sleep after saying a few unexpectedly kind words to his housekeeper, are among the best and most touching in the film. But it is a long way round to say simply that.

Bergman himself, the son of a pastor, admits that one of the most powerful influences on him has been the cruelly obsessive atmosphere of religion in which he was brought up. *The Seventh Seal* is probably the most extreme expression yet of that influence on his thinking; but in *Wild Strawberries* the influence, if submerged, is no less strong. Like the trail of a treasure hunt, clues are scattered throughout the film: the names of the characters—Abraham, Isak, Sara; the couple with whom the Professor nearly crashes—a resigned Catholic woman and her bitter, snarling non-Catholic husband; the extraordinary moment when the Professor, in one of his dreams, puts his hand against a window frame, tears it on a nail, and looks at his palm to see the stigmata at its centre—all these titillate the imagination, until one becomes



"Wild Strawberries": a dream sequence.

nervously on the watch for the next clue, terrified of missing some vital detail which may lead to the centre of the mystery.

It is by the standards of a mystical, spiritual drama that the film must succeed or fail. In Bergman's own mind all the symbols and biblical allusions may cohere into a satisfyingly complete statement. But in the film they do not. They merely distract attention, clouding the dramatic strength of a situation with intimations from the church, the theologian's study, the intellectual's garret. Constantly on edge for another answer to the vast acrostic Bergman has set, we keep losing the simpler values which the film often embodies. While we are trying to remember the story of Abraham and Isaac in the Old Testament, five minutes of the story have slipped by. . . . And what other allusions went past unheard in that time?

Bergman's characters are so subservient to his theme that it is hard to judge performances. But his Professor, as played by Victor Sjöström, is surely too good at heart, too soft and sympathetic, to suggest the selfish, cold figure we are meant to see. Isak's son, in an icily neurotic performance by Gunnar Björnstrand, is more in the spirit of the film, one of rigidly repressed hysteria. Ingrid Thulin, as the woman in danger of reliving with his son Isak's own tragic marriage, is faultlessly enigmatic, Electra without a hair out of place. Bibi Andersson, uninhibited, joyous, with one boy friend who believes in God and one who doesn't, is the unsullied soul poised between two spiritual worlds, and she bubbles with delightful inconsequentiality.

The mind that Bergman reveals in this film is one corrupted by despair, tormented by human cruelty, seeking salvation in a kind of simple good-heartedness that would be despised for sentimentality in a lesser artist. Perhaps these very features make him a man of his time; perhaps the very confusion of symbols is a relief, being such a rich source of theorising for anyone who likes to construct theories. Whether any of the solutions offered represents Bergman's own intention or not, or whether that intention is communicable at all, is another matter. He is a supremely skilful setter of crossword puzzles. If only we could be sure they had an answer.

KENNETH CAVANDER

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

IN BEAUTY, PROWESS, popularity, success, as Tennessee Williams sees them, there is something suspect, the risk of corruption. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Avon-MGM) is ponderously literal in suggesting each of these story-book qualities, but cannot refrain from cleaning up the corruption. The playwright has suggested that the set be a "room (that) must evoke some ghosts; it is gently and poetically haunted by . . . a tenderness which was uncommon." The play, he says, "deals with human extremities of emotion, and it needs that softness behind it."

This 'tenderness that was uncommon' has been vigilantly exorcised; indeed, none of Mr. Williams' favourite mood survives. What we are given behind the film is impersonal and pretentious: a green-turfed paddock and horses unacquainted with their master; not croquet, but a multi-car garage sprawling on the front lawn; a bedstead of rococo brass, yes, but a house that makes it look an anachronism.

Maggie and Brick are present for Big Daddy's sixty-fifth birthday. Gooper, Brick's elder brother, and his wife, Mae, have also come home for the event, and brought their brood—five little 'no-neck monsters' about to be joined by a sixth. Mae and Maggie (who is childless) are set to square off over the family spoils; for tests have confirmed that Big Daddy is dying of cancer. One of the play's main themes is the way this knowledge is received by all concerned: how it provokes avarice, pity, hypocrisy and mendacity in those around Big Daddy; and, in the unyielding patriarch himself, violent denial, a flurry of tardy lust, and, ultimately, bitterness moving towards harsh calm. Another (and according to the playwright a more central) aspect of the story is Maggie's commanding love for Brick in the face of his alcoholic defeatism. She wills Brick, one of the 'weak, beautiful people', to give her a child. Here the film's chief flaw emerges, for Elizabeth Taylor is unable to convince us that Maggie's problem is as urgent as all that. Miss Taylor is unimpeachable at suggesting the poor little rich girl of Hollywood fable, but her Cat, though admirably beautiful, emerges as one more kitten on a plush carpet; the heat, the vitality, the intense necessity of Maggie's love are not revealed; it remains thin and tepid, its only impact that of statement.

Of the other performances Mae (Madeleine Sherwood) and Gooper (Jack Carson) are compelling. Judith Anderson, glaringly miscast, though achieving at moments her own poignancy, never approaches Big Mama's slow-minded satisfaction, her earthiness, the candour of her love. And Burl Ives, in spite of his experience in the part (he and Miss Sherwood are the only two members of the original Broadway company), is half a continent away from the heat and squalor and courtly charm of the Delta. Paul Newman's Brick is confined within such rigidity of attitude that his performance remains in the eye as curiously rectilinear, as though dissipation were expressed in angles of deflection.

Time and again the camera is at once too close and too vague. Little of the intricate rhythm of entrances and exits, so provoking of tensions in the stage version, remains, and we break off continually to stare at each new intruder. The lens *can* move and therefore, *de rigueur*, must. In one of the script's most painful confrontations—that of Big Daddy and Big Mama on opposite sides of the grotesque birthday cake—where the dialogue needs no help from movement whatsoever, the director (Richard Brooks) shoots low down and close up, and asks Burl Ives, that static actor, to cross and recross uncomfortably in front of the girth-high lens.

It is significant of the poverty of conception that, in spite of the camera's increased range, we do not see Big Daddy's 'twenty-eight thousand acres of the richest land this side of the valley Nile'. Such liberty as is employed remains pointless; we follow Big Daddy to the cellar where he sits amidst a jumble of Xanadu-like junk with which he has precious little connection. Once here, dramatic necessity drives Brick down the stairs as well, to wield the (inevitable) axe, shouting, "Waste! . . . Worthless!", in a scene of destruction as contrived as it is gratuitous.

Richard Brooks and his co-writer (James Poe) have taken a multitude of pains to avoid offence. A clergyman satirically conceived is reduced to a lay deacon. The much-whispered homosexuality of Brick and his dead team-mate Skipper—which though never precisely overt, yet put the play into a club theatre in London—is entirely muffled and hedged. Even grammar suffers the scrutiny of the antiseptic eye: in Maggie's line, 'Somebody spit tobacco juice in her face . . .' the verb is altered to 'spat'.

The film is its own story of surrender. Is it sufficient to be grateful that all the harshness of the play has not been equivocated away? There remains the brute impulse to hurt that flared in the

claustrophobic heat of the play's bedroom. And there is developed more positively than before, anticipated by music with never a doubt in it, the author's fumbling affirmation of joy, his asseveration that Maggie will get 'life in her body.'

ROD MCMANIGAL

WHAT LOLA WANTS

THE HOLLYWOOD MUSICAL has relied so heavily upon adaptations of Broadway material in the past three years that one has become almost resigned to expecting something either totally disfigured in transformation (like *Pal Joey*) or slavishly reproduced (*Oklahoma*). Because of this, there is no reason why musical fans should have expected *Damn Yankees* (Warners) to be as good as it is. Co-produced and directed by George Abbott and Stanley Donen, the film version is far more exciting than the original stage production; and it sets a precedent (one to be followed by Hollywood in future, it is hoped) in using almost all of the original Broadway cast.

Damn Yankees (retitled *What Lola Wants* for Britain) also brings the Abbott-Donen combination into the foreground. Their work here makes their earlier efforts in *The Pajama Game* look comparatively uninspired, since the new film is filled with a natural spirit and lyricism that was either lacking or too forced and smugly confident in the earlier work. It is, of course, difficult to separate the specific contributions of the two men. But Abbott's keen sense of musical style and presentation, particularly in the direction of Gwen Verdon, is pure Broadway at its best, and one feels that this veteran of stage direction has brought the extra zest of New York into the Hollywood scene. Donen's eye for choreographed images and colour is equally perceptible and creative in the two big dance numbers. Abbott's direction of RKO's *Too Many Girls* (1940) is still vivid, and that particular musical remains one of the best in its genre. He is the dean of so many musical graduates—Donen himself, Gene Kelly, Van Johnson, Desi Arnaz—that his absence from Hollywood through the years has been cause for lamentation. His return with *Damn Yankees* is a happy one.

The Faust legend is mingled with Americana in this fable of ageing Joe Boyd, who 'sells' his soul to the devil in order to become a star baseball player for the downtrodden and defeated Washington Senators. Transformed into the strapping 22-year-old Joe Hardy (played with ingratiating good-nature by Tab Hunter), the Faustian business man leaves home and joins the team. To prevent Joe from becoming too homesick for his lonely wife, the devil (Ray Walston, amusingly malicious as a blue-serged cynic in red tie and socks who calls himself Applegate) sends his voluptuous disciple, Lola, to seduce him.

The casting of unknown players is a definite asset to the working of the fantasy-element within this story line. The plausibility of Shannon Bolin and Robert Shafer, for instance, as the middle-aged suburban couple uprooted by the seasonal excitements of major league baseball, immediately impresses the spectator; and when they burst out into the film's first song, "Six Months Out of Every Year", the perfect level of audience response is achieved.

In her screen debut, and notably in her famous seduction sequence sung and danced to the tango "Whatever Lola Wants," Gwen Verdon gives a stylishly captivating and satirical performance. A mixture of the clown and the pixie, a hard-boiled gamine with a great deal of heart, she seems, in a sense, the natural culmination of all her predecessors out of the wisecracking 'thirties musicals (Joan Blondell, Ginger Rogers, Glenda Farrell). As the youthful 179-year-old witch, summoned by the devil from a set of absurd luxury, she raises the nonsense of the plot to a certain stylishness of mimicry and dance.

Gwen Verdon is essentially a dancer. Her chief ally in this field is Bob Fosse, who choreographed the routines and who also appears with her in a mambo parody. Both artists are at their best in this rhythmic interlude, closely related to Fosse's earlier jazz-dance "Steam Heat", an isolated piece of virtuosity in *The Pajama Game*. Fosse has already proved his brilliance as a dancer in films (*Give a Girl a Break*, *My Sister Eileen*), but Hollywood has yet to mould his personality to fit its limited ranges of characterisation. His style of choreography leans heavily either upon jazz patterns or on jaunty mockeries in movement and attitudes, and his "Shoeless Joe" hoedown here is the highest moment of ensemble dancing seen recently in films.

Damn Yankees is, finally, 1958's most visually stylish musical. Harold Lipstein's photography, especially in the "Two Lost Souls"



"What Lola Wants": Rae Allen and the baseball team in a number.

nightclub number, is pure mood-colour, as murky and hue-struck as Donen's 'caveau' in *Funny Face*—which may or may not please those most alarmed by Shamroy's colour experiments in *South Pacific*. And after experiencing the ingenious credit titles, designed by Maurice Binder, one realises that the flair for humour and good taste has not crept out of Hollywood techniques after all.

ALBERT JOHNSON

A MATTER OF DIGNITY

A MATTER OF DIGNITY (Curzon), Michael Cacoyannis' latest film, is a disappointment after the achievements of his first three pictures. It is, quite simply, novelettish—without the warmth and humanity of *A Girl in Black*, and following instead the precedent of *Stella*. Where are the roots of this weakness?

In essentials its theme is promising. A well-to-do family, secretly bankrupt, are so preoccupied with maintaining their facade of dignity that the true dignity of life, with its compassion and respect for fellow men, is lost to them. Yet the style of the film—all gay parties and faces aghast—reminds one inescapably of 'the romantic story told in real-life pictures'. The real trouble seems to lie in the way the theme has been worked out in the plot.

Chloe Pellas agrees, for her family's sake, to become engaged to a millionaire, and rejects the man she really loves—a mysterious stranger called Galanos—because he is not rich enough. The family's concern with their dwindling fortunes makes them neglect their faithful maid, Katerina, who has gone back to her native village to nurse her small son. Eventually Katerina arrives to demand the money that is owing to her, and is refused it. She angrily threatens to shout the Pellas' secret to the neighbours, and while Chloe and her mother are struggling to prevent her she dies of a heart attack. Meanwhile Katerina's child has lost his powers

of speech, and Chloe, full of remorse, decides to take him to the shrine at Tenos as his mother had intended. Here he is miraculously cured; and in the final shots we see Chloe mingling joyously with the lower classes, whose physical proximity she has hitherto found unbearably offensive.

To the spirit of this story the treatment is eminently faithful. But then how else could one deal with, for example, a character like Galanos? He catches sight of Chloe dancing, secures an immediate introduction to her, within two minutes proposes to her, and kindles in her a love which is nevertheless thwarted first by the need to recoup the family fortunes and then by Chloe's shame at her own behaviour. He must therefore be a man with whom Chloe can fall in love on one meeting, but who can bring about no change in her values or plans. The only course is to make him as magnetic as possible and hope for the best. Only occasionally does reality break through, as in the scene where Chloe meets her ex-boy friend in a café. Here the idea of a love which must subside into friendship, the two people differing in the measure and quality of their regret, is most sensitively conveyed. It is startling to recognise at such moments that elsewhere we have not really been viewing the film's characters as human beings at all.

The plot, following the logic of sentiment rather than of situation, will rarely allow the characters to develop with any depth or consistency—however skilled Cacoyannis' handling of detail. Nor is the contrast between luxury and poverty made on any but the most obvious level (the rich man's yacht versus the child's toy boat). And the climax of the story, where disaster results from the attempts of the Pellas family to retain their 'dignity', depends upon a secondary theme in the drama—the fact that Katerina has a weak heart.

Finally this production is made workable only by the elemental and tragic beauty of Ellie Lambetti, who, lacking the chance to be fully human, errs towards the divine.

DAI VAUGHAN

THE INN OF THE SIXTH HAPPINESS

OF ONE THING, there is no doubt: the real Gladys Aylward is clearly a very remarkable person. Alan Burgess, who has told her story in his book *The Small Woman*, recalled how this Edmonton parlourmaid, consumed with an overpowering desire to carry out missionary work in China, scrimped and saved enough money to pay her railway fare to the mysterious land on the other side of the world. Here she joined another missionary (who later died) in setting up an inn where the muleteers gathered and were told Bible stories over their nightly meals; she also made friends with the local Mandarin, quelled a prison riot, fell in love with a Chinese soldier and helped to transport a hundred children over the mountains when the Japanese came.

Apart from some alterations in names and amalgamation of incidents, this is virtually the story told in Mark Robson's film *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (Fox)—yet there is a world of difference between the two. Following current practice, this is a long (160 minutes), expensive, nominally British production in CinemaScope and Eastman Colour, aimed at an international market and equipped with most of the necessary ingredients for success: war, children, religion, love, exotic faces, all bathed in an almost continuous musical score which persistently reiterates two themes, one sentimental, the other noble. And why not, some people may ask? It is a large, ennobling story, deserving of wide popular notice, so why not give it the full treatment? And its theme is Goodness; no slimy horrors or perversions here. This obviously represents a current mood, judging from the glowing press reviews of the film and the copious tears shed at the trade show.

But if this conception falls into the contemporary category of 'greatness', what are the standards that we are asked to accept? Miss Aylward's heroic story has been transformed into a cosy fable, not too grim, never really vulgar and just painful enough to dampen the handkerchiefs of the female audience it is mainly aimed at. In short, reality is acceptable as long as it is not too real—therefore, the film always remains one step behind the grimy, austere truth. This is nowhere more obvious than in the protracted final sequence: the trek across the mountains (despite the effective use of Welsh locations as stand-ins for China), misses all the strain and horror of such an undertaking. The children are just not convincingly tired or hungry or dirty; and one shot of bandaged

feet is not enough.

Other compromises are evident in the casting. Ingrid Bergman, with her beautiful smile and air of dedication, plays with firm, warm intensity. And yet, when one remembers that Miss Aylward is small in stature and carried out her sterling deeds armed only with unquenchable faith and obstinate determination, the perspective of the film seems wrong. (It is a pity that her meeting with a European priest turned General, in which they discussed their attitude towards the Japanese invaders, is not included in the film, for it reveals how, for Miss Aylward, spiritual commitment became fused with moral commitment. Nor is there any attempt to place the action in time or indicate the varied phases of the Sino-Japanese war.)

Much has already been written about the tragic spectacle presented by Robert Donat in this, his last film. As the Mandarin who befriends the young missionary, he wills himself on to the end, despite a breaking voice and obvious physical fragility; and his farewell scene must be the saddest speech in the cinema's history. It remains a performance, which is more than can be said for Curt Jurgens, who impersonates the Chinese soldier. Unconvincingly tricked-out in Oriental make-up, his playing coarsens as it progresses, so that the inflated 'love interest' is made to fall into place in the oldest Hollywood tradition.

But it would be unfair to those concerned with this production to suggest that nothing comes through. There are moments—the farewell at the station, the oriental bible readings—which are effectively moving or wryly amusing; and at the end, with the children's triumphal entry into the town, there is a kind of human glow, an affirmation of the spirit, as well. It will be good if audiences remember the achievement; but without an equivalent greatness in execution, one is left to contemplate the film that might have been.

JOHN GILLET

NOWHERE TO GO

FOR THE FILM-MAKER who wants to chance something offbeat without abandoning commercial security, the thriller has always been a favoured territory. A good solid suspense plot assures an audience, and the form itself is loose enough to be indefinitely stretched. The danger is in imagining that the suspense elements of the film can be left to look after themselves—and this, one feels, is what is partly wrong with *Nowhere to Go* (Ealing-MGM). Directed by Seth Holt, a former Ealing editor and associate producer, and scripted by Seth Holt and Kenneth Tynan, who has combined theatre criticism with work as Ealing's script editor, *Nowhere to Go* looked decidedly promising. In fact it is a failure, though neither negligible nor unintelligent; and the reasons for failure are themselves revealing.

The film is adapted closely, almost incident by incident, from Donald Mackenzie's novel about an escaped convict on the run. He is a hardened professional criminal, not the usual misunderstood victim of injustice, and the main quality of the novel was in its knowing, close up view of London crime. Escaped from gaol, Greg (George Nader) is betrayed by former associates, then abandoned by the criminal world after he has accidentally committed murder. (The film's sharpest scene, Greg's rejection by the gang boss, is preserved almost intact from the novel.) He finds refuge outside his own world, with a sort of espresso bar debutante who takes him off to a country hide-out; and he dies, in the screen version, believing that she too has betrayed him.

As a story, this fails on two counts: it never quite makes up its mind about its central character, presenting him at one moment as an enemy of society, then sentimentalising over him as a fugitive and victim; and it provides scarcely a shred of plausible motivation for the girl. Maggie Smith cleverly presents the type, vaguely artistic and vaguely discontented, but while the girl herself is real enough her reactions come from a dream-world in which escaped convicts have only to knock on doors to find shelter. If, again, the intention was to present the two characters as self-made outcasts, then their relationship should have been far more central to the film.

Instead, *Nowhere to Go* is a picture which often lets its story slide while it fills in background detail. It opens promisingly



"The Inn of the Sixth Happiness":
Robert Donat and Ingrid Bergman.

with a well-judged, slightly mysterious prison break; and its early scenes are very tightly edited, as one might expect from this director. It does several things well—sensible London locations, intelligent art direction, especially two flats neatly contrasted as variations on the smartly pretentious, and some believably off-hand dialogue. Some mechanics of the plot—the elaborately constructed confidence trick, for instance—are cleverly managed. The trouble is that they are not exciting; and one suspects that this is at least partly because the film-makers have been trying to exploit a formula they don't greatly respect, to make a 'different' thriller which looks and sounds contemporary without caring enough for the impetus of the story.

It is the film's final shot which comes closest to giving the game away. This is a really striking atmospheric landscape, a view of the Welsh countryside with the chimneys of an industrial town smoking in the distance. We don't often see this sort of view in a British film, and the shot is held for emphasis, designed clearly to state a point. But what point? A criminal has just been killed; a girl has lived through a brief adventure. And a shot which would make a fine conclusion to a bigger film merely imposes a pretentious final comment on a film not large enough to contain it. Here, fully exposed, is one of the traps that catch the contemporary serious film-maker: the temptation to impose 'significance', as it were, from outside. Seth Holt and Kenneth Tynan both have talent that our cinema needs and should use; but *Nowhere to Go* is a film of cleverness undirected, turned instead towards pretentiousness.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA (Warners) is almost a case history of a film that might have been. Scrupulously, even pathetically, faithful to the text of Hemingway's short novel, the film is sincere in its attempt to tell honestly the tale of the old fisherman and his quietly heroic struggle with the giant fish. But sincerity alone, unfortunately, does not suffice to make a good film.

What went wrong? The material of the book seems to beg for a severe, black and white Flaherty treatment. And indeed this was apparently how Fred Zinnemann originally conceived the film. After many weeks, many dollars and much discussion, Zinnemann and the producer Leland Hayward parted on the note that such handling would inevitably limit the picture's commercial possibilities. John Sturges then took over as director. The film was shot in WarnerColor, with further complications apparently caused by the problem of matching studio and location material with 16mm Kodachrome shots blown up to 35mm. The result, in any case, is a picture in which crude sea and sky blues jar with cruder orange skin tones; in which the old fisherman's face seldom looks the same shade of russet in two successive shots. Technically, there are other flaws seldom encountered in an expensive production from a great Hollywood studio—for instance, the shots in which Spencer Tracy's fishing line is all too obviously crossed by another line. The old man in his boat and the great fish he is fighting seem to exist in different films.

As for the story, this film should prove once and for all that Hemingway's prose is better read than spoken. The wonderfully elliptical shorthand which reads—or at any rate once read—with such freshness and rightness often sounds a little absurd when spoken aloud. Witness, for example, Tracy apostrophising the fish: "You're a fine fish, Fish. Fish, you fight a brave good fight." On the printed page, mind and eye achieve the proper fusion for a rapid comprehension and appreciation; spoken aloud, the effect can be disastrous. And the film preserves Hemingway's own language practically intact, both in dialogue and in the extensive quotations from the novel. Other Hemingway adaptations have suffered in the same way: presumably the film-maker would be safer to aim at the spirit—very marked and admirably suited to the cinema—and assign the dialogue to a writer safely immune from the Hemingway manner.

The film is then a failure, though neither a dishonest nor a shameful one. As the old fisherman, Spencer Tracy looks admirable in middle distance shots, though in close-up he appears too soft and actorish for this tough, wiry old man. The young boy, a soft-eyed and rather plain youngster, is appealing in a role ready-made for sentimentality. Sharp-eyed spectators may spot Hemingway himself, white beard and all, solidly seated in a bar in one of the film's last scenes.

CYNTHIA GRENIER



"The Immortal Land": stone lions at Delos.

THE IMMORTAL LAND

HELLENISTS FORM A CLUB. For members of the club, Greece, and everything associated with Greece from the Parthenon to rezzina, is a unique source of inspiration and beauty; but it is often extremely difficult for non-members to understand where this uniqueness lies, and on the subject of their beloved Greece, Hellenists become either embarrassingly rhapsodic or inarticulate. Basil Wright, in a film made with all possible leisure and independence, has tried to find words and images to express the special quality of this long-worshipped land. More specifically, he has chosen one theme—"... the co-existence of the past and the present which we found everywhere in Greece."

Sometimes this is interpreted as a literal, physical co-existence—the family drawing water from a well that was first used thousands of years ago, the garments woven amongst the very ruins of an ancient shrine, the sound of a jet plane flying over the temple at Bassae. Juxtapositions such as these are the standby of the film's method, and besides their immediate point—an obvious comment on the fact that in Greece not all the past is relegated to museums—they bear a profounder implication—the proof of a living tradition, a vital past in a vital present. And this is the claim that Mr. Wright appears to be making for Greece. Herein, he is saying, lies its uniqueness.

It is a claim which Mr. Wright uses all his cinematic deftness to substantiate. The shots of the countryside and the sculptures could hardly be surpassed for cunning and evocative construction. But the beauty of a particular view or a single statue is not at issue; all depends on the arrangement, the significance of the juxtapositions. And this indeed proves to be the Achilles heel of the film. Sometimes the collocations of images are meaningless—like the flowers shown blooming in the ruins of Mycenae (why is Greece different from any other country where flowers grow on ruins?); sometimes they are frankly misleading—when we are shown a modern Greek wedding and the commentary talks about the people "dancing and praying as they have always danced and prayed . . ."; and sometimes they lead to a real lapse in taste—when Michael Redgrave speaks some of the most astonishingly moving lines ever written, the description by Thucydides of the farewell given by Athens to the doomed army it sent out against Sicily, we are shown a steamer leaving the Piraeus. There is no co-existence here, no living tradition, only a deflation of a tragic moment in history and an inflation of a trivial moment in contemporary life.

Time and again contrivance has to come to the rescue of the argument. The pictures of Mycenae are eked out by a slyly inserted shot of Tiryns just when the audience might be persuaded

that it was looking at a corridor in Agamemnon's palace; Katina Paxinou is forced to speak her lines from *Electra*, by Sophocles, in competition with the Sinfonia Orchestra of London. The music—lush, twangling, and obtrusive—all but drowns the poetry.

Written by Rex Warner in a mixture of historical exaggeration and poeticising, the commentary strains to give conviction to the pictures. The dense clouds of words like 'fate,' 'eternity,' 'death,' 'divine,' soon become suffocating. Some of the statements, even to the layman, must be alarming—like the assertion that in the 5th century B.C. Athens controlled the Mediterranean, or that in Greece all science, politics and philosophy began.

There is life in Greece—in the cafés, buses, churches, festivals, harbours, and holiday-makers—but not in picturesque old peasants or posed scenes of respectable artists supposedly at work. The life is not to be orchestrated with sentimental chords from the voices of our leading actors or the strings of a symphony orchestra. Perhaps it can only be experienced at first hand. At any rate, in spite of this deeply sincere and single-minded attempt to open the doors of Greece to those who have been left outside, the club remains closed to non-members.

KENNETH CAVANDER

In Brief

VIRGIN ISLAND (*British Lion*) offers several immediate and simple pleasures. Its story of a young couple who set up home on a tiny uninhabited island (adapted by Philip Rush and Pat Jackson from a book by Robb White) has a breath of holiday. The British Virgin Islands locations, presented in attractive Eastman Colour, are constantly easy on the eye. And the atmosphere is determinedly youthful, fresh and gay.

It is, in fact, this determination which prevents *Virgin Island* from being anything more than a moderate comedy. After an uncertain opening reel, Pat Jackson heaps one comedy situation on another at an urgent pace which allows little time for characterisations. As a result one feels no great excitement or even sympathy when the film later attempts a dramatic sequence—the girl, about to give birth to a child, is left alone in a becalmed boat while her husband swims for help. A more relaxed tempo, and a closer feeling for the couple, might have meant a warmer, more engaging film. This is, to some extent, demonstrated in the most successful sequences, notably the reluctant playing of the Wedding March by a native steel band. Performances stress the away-from-it-all jollity. Virginia Maskell's air of Kensington high jinks is apt enough, though she is less suited to the occasional attempts at a little eroticism. John Cassavetes seems disappointingly self-

conscious, carefully breaking up his lines Method-fashion. The conversations between him and Virginia Maskell on his short story writing ("Talk to Hemingway, Steinbeck, Eliot," she encourages him, "they all went through what you're going through.") provide the film's unhappiest moments. Perhaps the most unexpected performance is Sidney Poitier's conventionally bubbling West Indian. One senses a certain detached calculation in the playing, yet it remains remarkably infectious. It is exactly right for this *Virgin Island*; but it would have seemed cynical in the film *Virgin Island* could have been.—DEREK HILL.

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE (*Columbia*). John Van Druten's stage comedy belongs with a whole tradition of Broadway and Shaftesbury Avenue successes. Moderately smart and effortlessly smooth, it demands nothing more than that the cast should be able to keep a single joke in play through three acts—the joke, in this case, being concerned with witchcraft in Manhattan and the family who practise it in the most contemporary of settings. The witch heroine runs a rather recherché art gallery; her brother plays the drums in a nightclub; her aunt ambles about in a haze of self-deluding sentimentality. Their spell-binding is a matter of casual, not very profitable parlour tricks, and the humour of the piece, such as it is, derives from the contrast between the idea of witchcraft and the rather straitened circumstances to which the comedy reduces it. The adaptation, by Daniel Taradash, is a little heavy for this flimsy theme; and Kim Novak, playing the witch who loses her special status when she falls in love with an ordinary man (James Stewart), has not much lightness of touch. The film gives her an exceptionally photogenic Siamese cat as a familiar, casts Elsa Lanchester and Jack Lemmon as her aunt and brother, and has a very funny performance by Ernie Kovacs as a vague, shambling but tireless seeker out of witchcraft. Hermione Gingold, a more traditional dealer in potions, intervenes with a little revue sketch of her own. But the film never rises to the comic extravagance that this casting might have encouraged. It has some pretty settings, of New York in winter, and Richard Quine (helped by James Wong Howe's colour camerawork) gives it a kind of surface elegance. But something has damped down the exuberance of Quine's earlier comedies. His present rather mannered technique, though adequate enough for the milder reaches of Broadway humour, lacks the rougher vitality that a few years ago placed him among the most promising of Hollywood's younger talents.—PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE MAN UPSTAIRS (*British Lion*), unkindly pushed straight on to the circuits without a West End showing, is certainly the best A.C.T. production to date, and the most encouraging British feature for many months. Made on a tiny budget from an original story and screenplay by Alun Falconer—whose first accepted script this is—*The Man Upstairs* shares some of the qualities of the notable series of American small-budget TV adaptations.

A vigorous, swiftly established opening introduces a tortured young scientist who disturbs his neighbours in a seedy London apartment house in the small hours of the morning. Eventually the police are called in. When a sergeant is injured, the police decide to get the scientist out of his room by force. His neighbours begin to realise that by acting together they may be able to persuade the police to try less violent methods.

There are several refreshing aspects to Falconer's treatment of this situation, which has already been shown to be exceptionally cinematic (*Le Jour se Lève*, *Fourteen Hours*). Questions of personal responsibility, of the case for non-violence, even of police mentality, are seriously, stimulatingly treated, and the dialogue sometimes bites surprisingly deep. Don Chaffey's direction is for the most part firmly to the point. Towards the end of the film a degree of repetitiveness is felt (one notices an "additional dialogue" credit); and some minor parts—a sarcastic artist, a drunken landlady—are uncomfortably artificial. But several performances—notably Dorothy Alison, Donald Houston, Alfred Burke and, in a tiny but beautifully brought off part as an earnest young army officer, John Charlesworth—have striking authenticity. Richard Attenborough plays the scientist with considerable sensitivity, though it might have been more effective to have used a less familiar actor for the part. The name of Ralph Bond as "production controller" suggests another possible reason for the success of this enterprising film.—DEREK HILL.

"*Virgin Island*": John Cassavetes and Virginia Maskell.





"La Crise du Logement": a programme on the housing situation in the "Si c'était vous" television series.

Cross Channel

by CHARLES HILDESLEY

TELEVISION IN FRANCE is at once more adult and more amateurish than in Britain or some other countries. A relatively high intellectual level in programmes goes hand in hand with clumsy technical blunders of presentation, due to lack of discipline or preparation; in the general atmosphere of experiment and improvisation, many producers still tend to expect from their viewers a friendly indulgence towards an exciting new toy they have not yet mastered. French television sometimes resembles highbrow amateur theatricals,

in which a good time is had by all and no matter if the lights fail.

Yet the percentage of serious, educative programmes is amazingly high, with fairly good listening figures; and an increasing number of people engaged in television in France are prepared to regard it as an artistic medium as important as the cinema or theatre, and devote long magazine articles to philosophising about its artistic future in the best French manner. With the number of sets still under a million, and a third of the population still out of reach of transmitters, the pressure for commercial or competitive television has not yet arisen. The state-controlled Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française has everything its own way, like the BBC five years ago, and with some of the same advantages and drawbacks. It does not have to play down to its audiences in order to retain their patronage, but it lacks the spur of competition which has done so much for the BBC since the birth of ITA. In an atmosphere of unhurried, creative haphazardness, French television is still finding its feet and trying to work out a policy.

In this situation, it is not surprising that relations with the cinema industry are a good deal better than in those countries where television is more extensively developed. The number of sets is still relatively so small that cinema attendance has hardly been affected at all. Box-office figures continue, in fact, to rise in most parts of France, except in the Lille



Dramatised sociology: Jacques Riberolles and Nicole Berger in a "Si c'était vous" programme about student life.

industrial area where the implantation of television sets is thickest. Cinemas, far from closing down as in Britain and the United States, are booming in France, and the industry does not expect the menace of television to make itself felt for another two or three years. For the moment, television has hardly begun to encroach on the traditional cinema audience, which in France is much smaller and more selective than in Britain, and tends to be middle-class, youngish and city dwelling. Television has so far found its viewers mainly among older people and suburban-dwellers not in the habit of going to the cinema. But undoubtedly this will change as the television habit widens; in the meantime both the cinema industry and the RTF are expressing the hope that some kind of practical *modus vivendi* can be found to the profit of both, without the death-struggle that has proved so harmful and costly in the United States. Matters may prove easier in France, partly because both television and, to some extent, the cinema are under government control.

At present, there is an agreement whereby the RTF can show up to 100 full-length feature films a year, provided that their commercial life in the cinema is considered to have expired. (This means that in most cases they must be at least five years old.) Last year the RTF showed *Hamlet*, *I Vitelloni*, *Casque d'Or* and *The Cruel Sea* among other films. At the same time, the RTF goes to some lengths to give publicity to the cinema. There is a good monthly programme called *Cinépanorama*, made up of interviews with stars and directors and visits to films in production. A weekly programme, *A vous de Juger*, gives excerpts from the latest films: the commentary, which used to be rather satirical, has recently been toned down under pressure from distributors.

2

Faced with television, the reaction of the cineaste or cinema-lover is either to prepare himself for a last-ditch fight and vow never to surrender, or else to ask himself whether, after all, the qualities that he values in the cinema—lyrical combination of sound, music and moving image, for instance—might not be perfectly transferable to television, and so prepare himself for a compromise. "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em." Some French cineastes have done this, and there is now frequent interchange of technicians between the two mediums.

But the more important names of the French cinema have not yet worked for television. The French documentary tradition, which has flourished so proudly in the cinema and continues to do so with men like Franju, Rouquier and Resnais, has not yet made much direct contribution to television. The RTF is taking documentary seriously, and has established several series of programmes ranging from science magazines to short plays on topical themes; but it seeks to evolve its own style and policy without much help from the cinema. It does not want to be merely a small-screen domestic cinema, any more than the cinema wanted to be merely filmed theatre.

One or two series of programmes bear some resemblance to the type of Associated-Rediffusion documentary shown at the National Film Theatre a year ago as "Captive Cinema". Notably, there is *A la Découverte des Français*, a group of 40-minute films produced and scripted by Jean-Claude Bergeret and directed by Jacques Krier. Both these young men began their careers in the cinema. They have tried to depict various aspects of French life in a documentary manner, not so very different from that of the cinema, save that it is more intimate, more informal, more aware of its audience. Their subjects have included life in a slum quarter of Paris and life in a dying village in the Alps; this winter the series is being continued with sketches of Pyrenees shepherds, the miners of the Lille area, and the life of a young primary schoolmaster and his family, notoriously the most underpaid of the French professional classes. The producers claim that although the RTF is state-controlled they are able to criticise the government in their programmes, provided that they do not move too close to current party politics. Three days after the presentation of each film, the RTF screens a "live" debate between the makers of the film, some of the people they have been filming, and specialists concerned with the subject. Here the Basque shepherd, for instance, can say whether he considers the finished film to be a fair depiction of his way of life. The result, as can be imagined, is sometimes a little naive; but the idea of such debates is a promising one, and is a good example of the RTF's policy of making television a medium of fireside discussion and so of bridging the gap between screen and reality in a way that the more make-believe world of the cinema cannot so easily do.

In another series, *Si c'était vous*, the director Marcel Bluwal and writer Marcel Moussy have tried to put into dramatic feature form certain contemporary social problems, such as the housing shortage and the exodus of young people from the country to the towns. Most of each programme is done "live" in the studio, interspersed with short sequences filmed in advance on location. Here again the results are a little naive and unpolished, partly owing to lack of funds and technical difficulties, but the experiment may lead to better things.

A number of poetic travelogues of French towns, starting with Lyons and Bordeaux, have been made by another young team, Jean-Claude Bringuier and Hubert Knapp. The style is intimate, informal and discursive. The camera enters a Bordeaux tram, looks at the passengers' feet, lazes in a boulevard cafe, chats to an old fisherman, wanders dreamily through parks or along narrow alleys. A maximum effort is made to include the viewer in the experience, to give the impression that it was he who took the journey. The script and camerawork are both of high quality, but much of the editing is very loose and one feels that informality has been allowed to be carried too far.

This looseness and lack of discipline is a fault that runs through much of the RTF's work. Bringuier has said that he made his film exactly as he liked and that it was scarcely checked by any senior executive before it went on the screen. This says much for the liberalism of the RTF in giving young artists their head, but the lack of sufficient artistic direction at the top is responsible for much of the amateurishness in programme presentation and woolliness of style. Jean

d'Arcy, the head of the RTF television, is an able man with a strong belief in the cultural and social mission of television, and a talent for steering his programmes through successive political quicksands; but he has too few good executives to back him up and supervise the work of producers.

The RTF devotes about eight hours a week to regular documentary programmes of a magazine type—fortnightly programmes on cooking, art and science, for instance, and monthly programmes on gardening and motoring. These are generally appreciated by viewers far more avid than their British counterparts for informative documentary. There is also a 50-minute weekly programme of literary criticism in which authors are brought to the microphone to discuss their new books. Often very interesting, this is less widely popular.

The news programmes are not very different from those of the BBC and ITN, save once again for a tendency to be diffuse. The RTF has not yet solved any more than British television the problem of how to present the day's news in visual terms, when, for obvious technical and geographical reasons, the appropriate images are not yet available in the studio. So one is left with stale pictures of what happened in Iraq two days ago, plus the distracting and irrelevant personality of the newscaster telling us what happened in Iraq this afternoon.

Successive French governments have always had considerable influence over the tone and content of the news bulletins, to the indignation of many of the RTF journalists concerned. Until the RTF gets its own charter like the BBC, this state of affairs is likely to continue, for radio and television offer temptations as a propaganda medium that no government can resist. M. Soustelle, as Minister of Information, has been particularly ruthless in placing Gaullists in key positions in the RTF's news hierarchy. As a result, the coverage of such events as the referendum campaign was hardly impartial. But there is nothing new or surprising in this, and it must be said that in the summer months before the referendum the only direct government propaganda on the RTF television was a series of short features on topical problems, brilliantly written and produced with a rare discipline of style by a young professor of law, Charles Morazé.

3

Sometimes the RTF is accused of being out of touch with its viewers, of not taking their wishes into account and living in a make-believe world of its own. There is not really much evidence for this, despite the comparatively sparse attention paid here to viewing statistics and other enquiries. The French are such an individualistic race that it is hard to pin down their likes and dislikes. They want, above all, to be distracted; but they also want to be informed. Variety and revue are the most popular types of programme, followed by full-length plays and films. Individual programmes are, on the whole, much longer than on British television, lasting often an hour even for a documentary; and the viewers are thought to appreciate this as they can settle down for long periods without distraction. Many Frenchmen still tend to regard television as a home cinema and prefer to watch it in the dark. They do not much like parlour games, considering them a boring form of distraction best left to the more Americanised television of Britain and Italy. The snobbish prejudice amongst intellectual and professional people against owning a television set is quite as strong as it ever used to be in Britain. The French are very family-minded and prefer to eat and talk at length in the evenings. Often they resent television as the intrusion of the real, external world with all its worries into the secluded family circle. This is curiously different from the attitude in Britain, where television sometimes helps to keep the family together and is thought of as bringing a welcome external world of glamour and fantasy



Improvisation: transporting television equipment for an outside broadcast on life in the Basque country.

into the drab domestic hearth.

There are at present about 900,000 sets in France. At the end of 1956 there were 450,000, and the figure is expected to reach one and a half million by the end of 1959. Even so, it is slow going compared with Britain and several continental countries. Much money is being spent on opening up transmitters to serve new areas, and not until the whole country is covered will there be any question of starting a second chain. If this comes, it is most likely to remain state-controlled but to accept advertising, as in Italy. A serious worry for the RTF is that the peripheral commercial stations in places like Luxembourg will, in time, be able to develop the power of their transmitters to cover a greater part of France. At present the Luxembourg station covers only the Metz area and cannot reach to Paris, while the Saar station, which belongs to Radio Europe No. 1, has closed down through lack of advertising revenue.

As in so many branches of French life, technical brilliance is fighting against clumsy organisation in the RTF. With their 819-line system, the French have developed what is in theory the clearest television in the world; and they can sometimes pull off dazzling technical achievements, as when last summer they relayed "live" to Paris the July 14th ceremonies in Algiers, by means of an aircraft poised in mid-Mediterranean. But they do not mind making the most elementary mistakes in the presentation of their nightly programmes, with announcements coming up at the wrong moment, programmes starting 10 minutes too soon or too late, and programmes being changed at the last moment for no apparent reason. One can readily forgive all these faults if the general approach to the medium remains fresh and creative and if something like an original work of art emerges from time to time. At present the feature and documentary programmes show promise rather than fulfilment, but the right experimental attitude is there. It would be surprising if the French genius, which has already given so much to the cinema, did not bring forth a television Renoir or Cocteau before long.

THE DECLINE OF A MANDARIN



"Abraham Lincoln": Walter Huston and Una Merkel.

TO ANYONE WHO BELIEVES in the cinema's living past, there will always be certain vital factors—a film (*A Woman of Paris*), a career (Rex Ingram, Rowland Brown) or a stage in a career (von Sternberg)—missing from his consideration of the cinema as a whole. There are plenty of text books to remind him of these factors. Otherwise, he must depend on his own faulty recollections of the original releases—always assuming he was born in time to see them; and above all on the archives, booking agencies and film societies, who may or may not share his belief in the need of a sound sense of historical perspective.

With the reclamation of von Stroheim in this country five years ago, only three main fields in the early American cinema seemed to remain in abeyance: the short career of Thomas Ince, who by 1916 was running Hollywood's finest studios at

Culver City, and whose prodigious output included dramas (*The Wrath of the Gods*, *The Typhoon*, *The Coward*) once regarded more highly than Griffith's; the foreign invasion in the 'twenties (Lubitsch, Leni, Sjöström); and Griffith's work during the same period. The National Film Theatre has recently gone some way towards repairing these deficiencies with its showings of *Way Down East*, *Orphans of the Storm*, *Isn't Life Wonderful?*, *Abraham Lincoln*; and (during the M-G-M season) Victor Sjöström's *The Scarlet Letter*.

It's an exciting experience, after some thirty years of controversy over D. W. Griffith's alleged decline, to come fresh to so much first-hand evidence. Did he decline? Well of course . . . in certain respects. No director can be expected to go on erecting monuments to mankind as patently sincere and exhausting as *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*; and

if, just for argument, we cite *Broken Blossoms* (1919) as his third masterpiece, it is worth mentioning that it is also his 415th film. In the circumstances it is both unreal and unreasonable to blame Griffith for failing to maintain, in the 'twenties, the same innovatory influence that he had throughout the previous decade. There is no reason why loss of influence should be the corollary of artistic decline; and surely nothing unusual in the overtaking of an older, established talent by younger ones (von Stroheim, Henry King). Griffith, in fact, has had rather a raw deal, and his decline is obviously not as prolonged, steady and uncomplicated as Lewis Jacobs makes out in his *Rise of the American Film*. For one thing, the two later films just shown in London (*Isn't Life Wonderful?*, *Abraham Lincoln*) are better than the earlier *Way Down East* and *Orphans of the Storm*. And for another, it does seem a trifle precipitate to start plotting the downward graph as early as 1916, when there is such a good argument to be made in favour of the lyricism and dramatic unity of a quickie like *True Heart Susie* (1919) as opposed to the dubious metaphysics and lumbering bulk of *Intolerance*.

2

Admittedly, though, there no longer seems much of value, apart from Lillian Gish's strong emotional projection, to justify the time, trouble and \$175,000 in rights expended on *Way Down East* (1920), 'elaborated' by Griffith from Lottie Blair Parker's rheumatically melodrama about an innocent girl tricked into a mock marriage by a wealthy farmer and then abandoned, pregnant. The elaboration consists mainly of a spectacular blizzard and the celebrated ice floe sequence. And here it is difficult to take Lillian Gish's predicament entirely seriously once one has noticed that the ice blocks speeding her to her doom belong to one river, while the waterfall awaiting her belongs quite clearly to another. A slightly earlier lapse in continuity concerns the seducer, whose distinctive high-boots stamp up the Bartlett's front steps, change into trouser legs on entrance, and change inexplicably back again when he takes his leave.

That one notices such minor distractions is some measure of the film's shortcomings. A familiar expression of Griffith's passionate social feeling, its dramatic validity is quickly undermined by characterisation as flat as the photography, depressingly low comedy relief and a generally bungled coaching of actors. Lowell Sherman's potentially able performance is cramped by the imposition of that hard-dying tradition whereby seducers carry on like female impersonators; and even Richard Barthelmess is made to pirouette. As usual, the best episodes are those giving gentler scope to Griffith's response to human affections: Lillian, madonna-like, baptising her dying baby; Lillian, listening to one man confess his betrayal and another his love; Lillian in the parlour alcove, quietly sewing near a roaring fire, in the only scene shot with real depth and intimacy.

After making *Dream Street*, a minor pot-boiler, Griffith returned to the kind of large-scale costume film that appealed to audiences through tried and trusted narrative devices, while assuaging his own frustrated longings to be taken seriously as a philosopher. He decided on another old play—already filmed twice, latterly as a Theda Bara vehicle—and changed the title to *Orphans of the Storm* (1921). The film begins as a fairly straight adaptation, with the two devoted sisters setting out for Paris by stagecoach to seek a cure for Louise (Dorothy Gish), who is blind. Instead she is kidnapped by a fierce old woman and made to beg in the streets, while Henriette (Lillian Gish) finds herself in a palace garden, at the mercy of the decadent Marquis de Praille, during one of his orgies (ladies jumping through fountains and casting *oeillades* at the camera). Her rescue, and final reunion with Louise, is brought about through the love of a handsome Chevalier (Joseph Schildkraut), though not before she has spent what seems like ages stretched prone beneath a guillotine-blade.

The film's strength is Griffith's indisputable showmanship, at its keenest in the reunion scene, with the blind girl singing in the street, and Henriette in a room above, absorbed in the Countess's story, hearing and gradually recognising her sister's voice, then finding herself prevented from reaching her. Again one is struck by the sheer impudence of Griffith's suspense draughtsmanship, and amazed at the degree of cumulative impact in all that laborious cross-cutting, solely concerned as it is with covering the same small area of plot development without showing the least inclination to advance or resolve it. If Stroheim's interest in a fire could most characteristically express itself through detailed investigation of the fire brigade's activities, then Griffith's would centre with equal concentration on every possible gesture of horrified incredulity that there is a fire.

Unfortunately Griffith's political moralising, though at no time impairing his innate showmanship, is a good deal less rewarding. Carlyle is invoked, Danton becomes "the Abraham Lincoln of France," while hysterical warnings against the menace of Bolshevism betray a familiar note of xenophobia. Like several contemporary German films, in fact, *Orphans of the Storm* is disfigured by its spineless attitude to the French revolution. But where they have a striking surface accuracy, lending an even uglier tone to their basically nihilistic content, Griffith's approach is so lacking in verisimilitude, taste and reticence as to be quite innocuous. Captions describe the aristocrats as "kingly bosses", and the nearest we get to a sense of democratic upheaval is "Exultant! The Revolution Almost Ready!" as if it were a milk pudding.

After a murder mystery, *One Exciting Night*, and the seduction of Mae Marsh by Ivor Novello in *The White Rose* (the stills look pretty, especially one of fireside romance), Griffith returned to the epic form with *America*. Whether or not this was inspired, as Lewis Jacobs says, by the phenomenal success of Cruze's *The Covered Wagon*, it becomes increasingly difficult to follow a line of argument that cites Griffith's next film, *Isn't Life Wonderful?* (1924), as further evidence of his "lack of touch with the times." There is, on the contrary, something distinctly brave and encouraging in Griffith's decision to go to Germany and make a film described by Jacobs as "simple to the point of bareness (which) appeared drab and out of place beside the films of glamour and elegance then in vogue."

Acutely felt and finely expressed, *Isn't Life Wonderful?* describes the struggle for existence of a family of Polish refugees in post-war Germany. Historically it is important as the rounded summation of all Griffith's earlier social *exposés*, beginning with *A Corner in Wheat* in 1909; and in its anticipation, at a time when Germany still weltered exclusively in expressionism, of new trends to be indicated a year later in Pabst's *Joyless Street*. Griffith's approach is quite dissimilar, of course, being sad and romantic rather than detached and clinical; but—apart from that operetta finale in a cosy little cottage—there is an almost documentary force in his portrayal of starvation and squalor. Perhaps he is apt to make his points with newsreel brusqueness, inserting authentic battlefront scenes and haunting shots of sullen, emaciated children in something like his old *tableau vivant* manner. But when he does manage to assimilate this location material into the mainstream of dramatic continuity, the results are memorable. The meat queue sequence in particular, with prices soaring after every customer is served, and the girl's growing apprehension as she keeps counting her money and studying the blackboard, is intensely moving.

Actually, a lot of the film's quality derives from its acting, and the outstanding performance of Carol Dempster, a hunted, intense little creature of touching poignancy. As her boy friend, a gassed ex-soldier, Neil Hamilton is more virile and gauntly mature than the usual run of Griffith heroes, and the restraint of his sick-bed scene carries great conviction. Best of their scenes together is the climactic pursuit through a forest at dusk, with the frightened couple mistaken for



"Griffith's narrow and arbitrary ideal of femininity . . ." Lillian Gish as the defenceless heroine of "Way Down East".

profiteers by a surly gang of labourers, she begging in vain to be allowed to keep their winter stock of precious potatoes, and finally both sinking to the ground, a year's work wasted, their spirit momentarily broken, while the nearby river flows symbolically on.

Inevitably, in a dropsical year that laboured and brought forth *Monsieur Beaucaire*, *Beau Brummel* and *Dante's Inferno*, Griffith's reproachful little *pietà* meant nothing at the box-office. Six minor films followed before he returned to independent production and congenial subject-matter with *Abraham Lincoln* (1930). His first talkie and his last available work (*The Struggle*, made a year later, was withdrawn after a few performances), it offers little conclusive evidence of Griffith's potentialities as a sound film director. Admittedly, it is episodic and often static, but this has always been Hollywood's traditional approach to the sober, burning-the-midnight-oil school of biography. Jacobs pounces unerringly on the two blatant examples of Griffith's weakness for bathos: the death of Ann Rutledge, played quite appallingly by Una Merkel as a simpering nanny-goat, and Lincoln's pardon of a condemned boy soldier, glassy-eyed from his visitation by a 'boyhood chum'. Yet he makes no mention of all the good things: Walter Huston's unique impersonation of Lincoln, the impeccable playing of briefly seen historical figures, Hobart Bosworth's tragic nobility as General Lee. The crowd scenes are magnificent; there are one or two vast, busy shots of battle preparation as authentically Brady-ish as any in *The Red Badge of Courage*; above all, there is the assassination of Lincoln, the rightness of its off-hand, prosaic view of violence quickly brought home by the absurd figure of John Wilkes Booth popping on and off the stage in a feeble burst of gratified exhibitionism. Griffith could be surprisingly perceptive on occasion.

He could also be maddeningly obtuse. Voted the director of the year for *Abraham Lincoln*, he retorted that it would have been a far better film had he not been compelled to make it "all dry history with no thread of romance." Yet it is in his writings that one most clearly observes the hint of megalomania that contributed to his downfall.

There is something of Citizen Kane about this exiled mandarin, expressing disappointment in Europe's war damage and finding it, "viewed as drama," less impressive than his sets for *Intolerance*; or railing against income tax as the path to Bolshevism; or planning to film *Faust* (till Lillian Gish stopped him) in 72 reels. On his own ground as a liberal, 19th century humanist, Griffith played an inestimable rôle in the cinema's development. But away from his own fireside and into an earlier or a later century, the result at best was a flawed and compromised minor masterpiece (*Isn't Life Wonderful?*); at worst, an outmoded soap-opera (*Way Down East*) or a rabid, reactionary apologia (*Orphans of the Storm*).

3

Throughout his career, Griffith's artistic development was notoriously handicapped by his ominously strong *penchant* for stories concerned with the rape or general maltreatment of defenceless girls, and it is interesting to speculate on the results had he, instead of Sjöström, been chosen to direct Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1926). Its classic line and interior conflict between austere repression and elemental law might have produced a notable extension to Griffith's talents: for Sjöström such a subject could only be a variation on a theme expressed many times previously in such works as *Ingmar's Sons* and *Love's Crucible*. None the less, Sjöström approached the assignment with fresh sympathy and thorough professional skill, and today his film seems the most artistically satisfying of the five discussed here.

His achievement is the more remarkable when one considers the talents employed on it. Frances Marion, previously Mary Pickford's screenwriter, refined the novel into a simple, traditional folk-tale about an innocent little seamstress, Hester Prynne, in Puritan New England, her loyal devotion through years of persecution to the minister, Dimmesdale, who is the secret father of her child, and the ultimate cruelty of fate, personified by the Ibsenish figure of her long-lost husband. The isolation of the main characters is emphasised by the stylised but flexible photography of Hendrik Sartov, Griffith's one-time cameraman, who framed his lovers within brightly lit foregrounds behind which the backdrops washed eerily away.

Impressive as the New England atmosphere is—and all re-created on a Culver City lot—it is equalled by the performances. Lars Hansen, though somewhat too rigidly open-mouthed in the middle scenes of anguished guilt, brings



Lillian Gish and Henry B. Walthall in "The Scarlet Letter".

welcome humour to his early embarrassment in the face of Hester's bird-like curiosity, and real power to his final breast-beating self-denunciation on the scaffold. Henry B. Walthall as Prynne, and Joyce Coad as the child, are both perfect. But when all is said and done, it is Lillian Gish's Hester that gives *The Scarlet Letter* its depth, its impact, its final touch of greatness. Sjöström is very much an actress's director, and from the earliest scenes of Hester's mercurial innocence, thoughtlessly "running and playing on ye Sabbath" or leaving a forbidden scrap of laundry draped shockingly over a currant bush, to the pathos of the doom-

laden finale, Lillian Gish plays with a maturity and unforced, natural eloquence denied her throughout her apprenticeship with Griffith.

Like the young Bette Davis, whom she here uncannily resembles, Lillian Gish has a surprising physical and mental toughness, an intensity in repose and an inexhaustible spirit of psychological enquiry all alien to Griffith's narrow and arbitrary ideal of femininity. This fresh discovery allows us one last, inescapable conclusion: it was in reality Griffith, and never Sjöström, whose acting school was one of repression.

Book Reviews

SCANDAL AND PARADE, the Theatre of Jean Cocteau, By Neal Oxenhandler. (Constable, 21s.)

"WE PERFORM VERY high and without a safety net. A sudden noise might kill my comrades and myself," says the stage Orphée. Cocteau's art is a tricky theme for the critic, full of the mystery which he values so highly—the mystery of the words which are transparent and the *trucs* which are ingenuously explained, and yet which retain their secret depths of evocation or excitement. A better image for Cocteau's elusiveness is that of a glamorous butterfly; and Mr. Oxenhandler plays the rôle of a heavy-footed Anglo-Saxon catcher panting after with his net. Cocteau, who writes with the purity of *Renaud et Armide*,

Ce faux soleil envoûte.

La lumière regarde et le silence écoute.

has for analyst a writer who uses such teasing sentences as:

In Mallarmé syntactical compression, purposeful ambiguity, asyndeton, synecdoche, and such devices which tend to obscure the link between language and things, give us the impression of a purely phenomenal world where the mind intuits only itself.

Even so, *Scandal and Parade* is a good deal more serious and sensible than many a Fulbright Fellow's doctoral thesis might turn out to be. It offers a detailed and thoughtful account and analysis of each of Cocteau's major plays and of a number of the films. A chapter called *The Entre Deux Guerres* is an intelligent attempt to place Cocteau in relation to his time and his contemporaries. Mr. Oxenhandler deals exhaustively with a number of Cocteau's recurrent themes—the problems of liberty and of self-knowledge, the identification of love and death, angelism and the angel-heroes.

The book fails because it cannot find a consistent thesis. The trouble is partly that Mr. Oxenhandler does not distinguish philosophy and psychology. He is never clear in his own mind (he is hardly to be blamed) what is the didacticism of a conscious "message", what a psychological manifestation—"the fabrication of the imagination operating under psychological pressures." Confusion is inevitable.

A more profound cause of failure may be his method of isolating a single branch of Cocteau's creative activity. Cocteau's great quality (and his special contribution to the cinema) is his realisation of a personal *poésie* not restricted to a single medium. Progressing from Valéry's definition of a poem as "a sort of machine for producing the poetic state by means of words," he has sought a great range and variety of poetic means—from the vacuum cleaner and the angel-glazier's vitreous wings in the stage *Orphée* to the elaborate mime of *Roméo et Juliette* and all the trickery of the

films. To ignore whole areas of activity—the novels, the poems, the drawings, the publicity—is to sacrifice the means of understanding this elusive, insistent contemporary.

Mr. Oxenhandler is not, at least, an idolator. Speaking of *La Machine à Ecrire* he says:

The apparent range of Cocteau's art is illusory. He is a writer with only a few themes and a few manners; in writing this play he made the mistake of believing the legend which portrays him as a Jack of All Trades.

If he were more often so down to earth in speaking of his subjects, he might come—and bring us—to a better understanding of Cocteau. We might then decide that, for all the deliberation of everything he does, Cocteau is, finally, an intuitive (some people will still say inspirational) artist; as he likes to suggest himself: "Since these mysteries surpass us let us pretend to be their organiser."

DAVID ROBINSON

INTERNATIONAL FILM ANNUAL No. 2, Edited by William Whitebait. Illustrated. (John Calder, 25s.)

SOME COLLECTIONS OF ESSAYS on the cinema have been of lasting value: *Experiment in the Film*, for instance, *Garbo and the Night-Watchmen*, or *Working in Films*. They were made of enduring stuff—statements of principle, records of fact, or criticism that was witty and illuminating—and the public for books like these renews itself continually. There is also a public—the fans—for the average film annual, a gaudy bundle of portraits, gossip and stills from films they will see next year.

But what is the target of this international annual, most of which is too ephemeral for the first public and too serious for the second? Not, presumably, the readers of *SIGHT AND SOUND*, who will already have seen there much of the opinion and information it contains. Rather, it seems to be intended for the audiences of the specialist cinemas and film societies, who take a lively but not too analytical interest in the cinema, who like to keep up-to-date, and who are more likely to read *Films and Filming* and the Sunday reviews. Indeed Karel Reisz seems to aim at a new audience, for there are signs of writing down in his piece on experimental films at Brussels. But this is a minor fault in an account so informative and readable.

It is a pity, however, that more British film intellectuals do not exert themselves to please. Too much of the academic film criticism in this country, vainly searching for scientific detachment, is so badly written as to be all but unreadable. Too many even of the best ideas are phrased in a vile, abstract jargon, like an acrid smog through which one has to grope for the meaning. In this respect, especially, the brief round-up of French film-makers by Jean Queval and Gilbert Salachas is exemplary. Concentrated, perceptive and frankly personal, it sparkles with the allusive wit of experts who know their subject inside out.

In view of the overlapping descriptions of *Dom*, *Kanal* and *The Little Island*, some of the omissions in this volume are strange: Queval and Salachas do not mention Franju, one of the most powerful and original of French directors; Mr. Reisz, too, might have found room for a footnote on Alfred Radok's revue at the Czech pavilion: this blend of film and theatre, propaganda and fantasy, was an experiment of unusual brilliance.

The most permanently valuable contributions here come from Welles, Renoir, Ray and Greene. The artist's voice commands a special respect, and Welles puts the artist's case against the show-

man with bitter eloquence. Bridging creation and criticism, Paul Dehn speaks from experience of the need to look further down the credits than we usually do in judging a film. As satire, Dilys Powell's festival piece is amusing and true.

For much of the topical remainder, a periodical or a paperback like the former Penguin film annual would be a better medium. Although the brief histories of Australian and Japanese production will keep their interest, the reports on British and American trends will be out of date in six months. The colour stills, moreover, which are atrocious, must have increased the cost considerably, and if the annual is to continue on its present lines, it would be better value in a cheaper and more modest form.

DERICK GRIGS

PERIODICALS

RECENT ADDITIONS to the world's film magazines include the American *Film Quarterly*, a successor to the *Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television*, *Flashback*, from the Argentine, and *F*, a new West German quarterly. *Film Quarterly's* first issue is promising though a bit uneven. Its reviewing standard is high; its articles include one on the relation between Japanese theatre and film and another by Gavin Lambert on the differences of function between artist and critic viewed from a personal standpoint. *F*, edited by Enno Patalas, devotes much of its second issue to a lengthy article on Fellini, complete with a useful and concise filmography. New ground is broken with an account of the "Resurrection of UFA". The third newcomer, *Flashback*, is entirely given up to articles on Ingmar Bergman; and its Bergman filmography is probably the most complete that has yet been published.

"Bergmanorama" has recently become fashionable. In the last few months the French *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Cinéma 58* have both carried articles on Bergman and articles by him. Buster Keaton has also attracted a lot of attention. *Cahiers du Cinéma*

and *Cinéma 58* have again been much to the fore, though the most revealing material is probably contained in *Film Quarterly's* Keaton interview. The latest number of *Cahiers* features two articles on the British cinema—"Cette Angleterre", by Louis Marcorelles, and "L'impossible cinéma anglais", by Alain Tanner. Taken together, they provide a provocative and uncompromising analysis of what their authors feel to be wrong with film-making in Britain. Going from the radical to the reactionary, it is worth noting that the American monthly *Films in Review*, well-known for its often unique compilations of information on film personalities (mainly American), but notorious for its anti-egghead phobia, has excelled itself in the November issue with some ludicrously paranoid statements. An editorial preface to a report on the Brussels showing of the "Best Films of All Time" accuses the sponsors of the selected "greats" of being and having always been Communists or fellow-travellers! American film journalism shows another face in the roneoed magazine *Cinemages*, edited by Gideon Bachmann and inclining mainly towards exploration of the off-beat and non-commercial. *Cinemages 9* contains six unfilmed scenarios, by James Agee, Salvador Dali, Maxim Gorki, Henry Miller, Romain Rolland and Dylan Thomas.

Film Journal, published by the New Melbourne Film Group, is also roneoed and like *Cinemages* presents erudite and informative research compilations. Its tenth number is devoted to a study of "Comédie Noire", its eleventh to the Japanese cinema. Personalities, as always, account for a solid bulk of recent film journalism. *Bianco e Nero*, No. 8, contains a very comprehensive bibliography of critical writing about Visconti and his films; Nos. 10-11 carry an article and filmography on Asta Nielsen. Both are excellent pieces of documentation. Indeed the overall picture presented by the periodicals mentioned (all of which can be found in the Film Institute's Information Department), is of the increasing importance attached to the more encyclopaedic functions of film journals.

TONY BUCK

Correspondence

The Critical Issue

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—May I, as both a film-maker and film critic of the 17-22 generation (although I cannot really claim to be bearded and scruffy), make some comments on your very stimulating discussion, "The Critical Issue". One of the key points to come out of that, it seems to me, was that there is no vigorous, anti-SIGHT AND SOUND magazine. This is true. It is false to say that there is no anti-SIGHT AND SOUND "movement" (remembering that the word is widely mistrusted these days), but this movement is anti-in the sense that it wants to spend money making films rather than publishing uneconomic magazines; and that it is opposed to essentially what Lindsay Anderson wants it to support. That is to say, most of the University film enthusiasts one knows would rather read *Films and Filming* and shoot college newsreels than read SIGHT AND SOUND, which is allied in their minds with the pieties of *The Observer* and the technical incompetence of *Free Cinema One*.

There is, in fact, another "establishment" to fight which in this case is within the film world. It consists of the Film Societies, the Observer Film Exhibition, the best part of the NFT audiences, Lejeune's criticism, and so on. But the point is not that this "establishment" is "middle-class" or whatever, but that in terms of sophistication it is a middle-brow group: many of the things fought for by the 'thirties and 'forties critics as avant-garde tastes (like the Russian Silent Cinema and even Italian Neo-Realism) are now the established, conventional, pious, middle-brow things

to like. Even white hopes like Bergman are becoming widely accepted—although, happily, Bardem, Buñuel and Bresson are not.

Our generation is not going to "rediscover" the cinema—it is already an established part of our ordinary lives—nor are we suddenly going to "find" television. Few young cineastes will forgive the appalling technical slipshodness of so much TV, are usually very irritable at the pacing of TV programmes; and, generally speaking, they regard as phoney the attempts made to draw distinctions between the two media. Instead of all this the young take odd, isolated, almost idiosyncratic lines like: preferring later Hitchcock to the pre-war vintage, enjoying the fast, tough (perhaps sadistic?) gangster film, rhapsodising over Nazi films, being bored with neo-realism and free cinema: revolting in fact, against the OK or the "nice", gentle taste in films . . .

Young people these days regard it as a thankless task to urge the commercial industry to make experimental films (anyway they enjoy the current product quite enough—consider the number of Lee-Thompson fans, for example), they would rather make them themselves. They do not consider it very interesting to rave about their private tastes, except to friends over coffee; *Death of a Cyclist* did not do too well and was taken off, but who cared?—they had seen it: predictably, SIGHT AND SOUND was rather tepid, just as they dismissed another "cult" masterpiece, *Smiles of a Summer Night*, as "hollow and cynical". But, of course, what youth wants and enjoys now is "hollow and cynical" films—that is why *Sweet Smell of Success* was so much liked.

Admittedly film-making is a costly and an involved process, but in Film Societies and Universities the number of available cameras, the amount of available money and the droves of willing writers, directors and actors are swelling rapidly. After all, if you don't insist on synch. dialogue you can produce a 20-minute sound picture for a budget of well under £100. What I am saying is that young cineastes these days are more interested in their own films than other people's; that they want a film magazine for information without tedious eccentricity and that many of them roneo copies of their own vigorous and personal house-magazines, which may have a circulation of 50-500, but SIGHT AND SOUND will not know of it—unless some thoughtful soul has sacrificed a

shilling to send a copy to the BFI Library.

The situation is not grim, just difficult to see unless you are a part of it.

13 Halford Road,
London, S.W.6.

Yours faithfully,
IAN C. JARVIE.

SIR,—Lorenza Mazzetti has drawn my attention to the report of a discussion on experimental cinema printed in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND. In the course of this discussion, Lindsay Anderson makes several references to Free Cinema, one of them in term which suggests that he regards the movement as a failure.

First of all, I want to point out that Anderson is the self-appointed spokesman of the movement. No one wishes to deny him this privilege, as it was his idea. However, the movement does not merely concern Anderson, and he should at least have tried to avoid giving the impression that because it is moribund nobody is doing anything—I would like to point out that Lorenza Mazzetti and I have been making new films during the last two years: having failed to overcome the censor's objection to *The Teddy Boy*, scheduled for production in 1957 under the sponsorship of The National Film Finance Corporation, we decided to cut our losses and go abroad, where we have been making films since. One of them will be sent to Venice next year. . . .

As for the supposed failure of Anderson's movement, for which he blames an unenthusiastic "younger generation of film-makers," his opinion would sound more convincing if he included the lack of enthusiasm for Free Cinema on the part of those more intimately concerned—I have never been able to understand what it is all about, or how it can be of practical assistance in helping to get a new production going; it is hardly worth wasting time on a "movement" which tries to tie the same highly ambiguous label to every film which tries for a first showing at the National Film Theatre. This was the *sine qua non* of the first showing of *Together*. I have never been able to understand why, particularly as Lorenza Mazzetti and I made it under the sponsorship of the British Film Institute when we had never heard of Free Cinema.

A third point Anderson should not forget before somewhat bitterly condemning others for lack of interest in his idea is that I proposed making a production company and invited him to take part at the time of our difficulties with *The Teddy Boy*. He refused, saying that he had no time—(nor had I, as I was then faced with having to produce an entirely new film). I came to the conclusion that Anderson was more interested in "movements" and a "following" than in the practical business of fighting with producers, distributors and the censor. For this reason I contracted out, Lorenza Mazzetti came with me, and so the rot started. If the ship is now going down Master Anderson should stop crying "rats!" He has only himself to blame.

Yours faithfully,
Live Cinema,
Piazza di Spagna, Rome. DENIS HORNE.

Horror Still

SIR,—Cannot something be done to suppress for all time the publication of what is apparently the only existing still from the 1929 *The Devil Bear*? Its reappearance on page 326 of your Autumn issue has reduced me to a state of mind resembling that of Mervyn Johns in the last reel of *Dead of Night*, realising that the nightmare of horror is about to start all over again.

I was but a happy lad of some ten years when I first encountered that still. It was in Rotha's *Movie Parade*, and since it was honoured in a section devoted to great adventure films—a section that even excluded *King Kong*—I felt that here indeed was a film that should answer every demand for excitement and thrills. Alas, no one had ever heard of it. It seemed to have vanished. Through the years, my hopes of ever seeing it constantly waned. In 1950 I came to America, with still the faint hope that one day I might unearth this rare treasure. Finally, almost twenty years after I had first seen the still, I found that a print existed in Wichita, Kansas. In haste, it was sent for, and it duly arrived. With an ecstasy approaching Sydney Greenstreet's as he unwrapped the Maltese Falcon, I threaded the film on to the projector. And 70 minutes later my little world had fallen apart quite as completely as had Mr. Greenstreet's.

The Devil Bear (the title has nothing to do with the film) has less excitement and interest than the cheapest PRC film of the "White Pongo" type. Nothing whatever happens in it. A boring and talentless cast (Carroll Nye was the biggest "name" in it) sits around in cabins and forest glades of the Tundra—waiting, and

waiting. The scene in the still occupies a few fleeting seconds in the last reel. . . .

There are usually reasons why films are obscure or forgotten, and in the case of *The Devil Bear*, I could fill a volume with them. I can assume that Mr. Rotha never saw the film, and was merely, like me, intrigued by the still, and unaware of the suffering he was about to unleash on the world. Now SIGHT AND SOUND has done it again. You might be interested to know that within a few days of this issue being available in New York, no less than half-a-dozen people asked me about this film, and where it could be obtained!

Yours faithfully,
Motion Picture Service,
210 W. 70th Street,
New York, U.S.A. WILLIAM K. EVERSON.

John Paddy Carstairs

SIR,—What a strange feeling—to be mentioned in SIGHT AND SOUND and not be panned—but then, of course, this was a compilation and not a review. Purely for the record (next compilation?) I would have thought the information that I was working at M-G-M and Columbia in America (*Yank at Oxford*, Mady Christians' *A Wicked Woman*, etc.) would have been more interesting than "a gate man at Paramount", or rather perhaps that I worked as a "soda-jerk" on Hollywood Boulevard. . . . And my screenplay credits too could have been more exciting. I am not querying what you've left out so much as the selection of what you've put in! (After the F.A.A.-R.N.V.R. I went to University for instance.) And the big point I want to make is that to eat and get assignments a director has, sometimes, to take films he doesn't necessarily want to direct—for recognition; other assignments, and a medium full *estomac*. . . .

Yours faithfully,
Pinewood Studios. JOHN PADDY CARSTAIRS.

Vancouver Festival

SIR,—Your correspondent, Alan Haydock, writing in the last issue, dismisses the Vancouver Film Festival as ". . . a half-hearted affair . . . part of British Columbia's Centennial celebra-

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DIRECTORS' INDEX

The October number of SIGHT AND SOUND contained an Index to the work of 80 British feature directors, the most comprehensive reference compilation of its kind yet undertaken in Britain. Reprints of this 16-page Index are now available.

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tions. . . .” However, he is misinformed on one point, uncharitable on another.

In the first place, the Vancouver Film Festival was not part of the B.C. Centennial celebrations, it coincided with them. The Film Festival was part of the highly successful Vancouver International Festival of the Arts, and will henceforth be an annual affair.

In the second place, it seems absurd to call “half-hearted” a festival that showed, among other films, *Pather Panchali*, *Don Quixote*, *The Cranes are Flying*, *The Burmese Harp*, *Porte des Lilas*, *Notte Bianchi*, *Orders to Kill* and *Nine Lives*. Because these films had already been seen at European festivals, their collective showing 7,000 miles away is still a valid and exciting event, especially in an area where outstanding European and Asiatic films enjoy neither the commercial success nor the public acceptance that they do in Europe.

Yours faithfully,

Vancouver Film Society,
 1886 West 11th Avenue,
 Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

W. M. DAVIES

Neglected Comedian

SIR,—From time to time further comedians of the silent era and the later 'thirties are presented to us for reappraisal, but why is the charming and individual slapstick of Snub Pollard so neglected in this country?

Pollard, known as Beaucitron on the continent, is characterised by his absurd, wilted Kaiser moustache, and his peculiar *forte* is in brilliant mechanical improvisation; but he is also a most appealing mime. He is supposed to have made about 200 shorts for Roach in his peak period, working at first with Harold Lloyd and Bebe Daniels, but later appearing solo, in which he outshines both Lloyd and Langdon.

We are told that Comedy is largely a matter of fashion, and certainly neglect of this kind is not unique. Will Hay has become a metropolitan necessity only belatedly, and was in fact a safe scoffing-topic in Shaftesbury Avenue until very recently; whilst Raymond Griffith remains little more than a name to most of us. But can't the Institute summon up a really shameless crusading zeal to acquire at least a fairly representative distribution library of worthy comic material, before (as Mr. Whitebait has timely reminded us) it is too late?

Yours faithfully,

Ventura,
 Willingham Road,
 Market Rasen, Lincs.

COLIN SMITH.

Greetings

JUST RECEIVED TWENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY NUMBER SIGHT AND SOUND. GLAD TO SEND CONGRATULATIONS BEST WISHES TO THE MOST INTERESTING MAGAZINE FROM TBILISI STUDIO GRUZIA FILM—
 GEORGE GIGOLACHVILI, DIRECTOR MANAGER

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912 AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF SIGHT AND SOUND, published quarterly.

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1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers, are:—Publisher, British Film Institute; Editor and Managing Editor, Penelope Houston; Business Manager, Desmond Peter Thirlwell (all of 164, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2.)

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5. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semi-weekly, and tri-weekly newspapers only.)

Signature of business manager: D. P. Thirlwell.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day October, 1958—A. F. H. Lindner (a Commissioner for Oaths). (My commission is for life.)

GISH AND GARBO, *continued from page 17*

and looking at each other. And it was then in that free and happy moment that Garbo seemed to condense, as it were, into a crystal of gracious joy in herself.

Remembering the distillation of the whole of her beauty and art in that lovely moment, makes me wonder at the meanness of the human mind which still believes the most obviously ridiculous of all Garbo myths. *Photoplay* gave it birth in the same April article that carried the deportation threat. "Metro wanted Stiller, and Miss Garbo, his find, was signed reluctantly at a sliding scale of \$400, \$600 an \$750 a week for three years, more to please him than anything else." Metro wanted Stiller? He never made a single picture there. Knowing his temper, the studio let him play interpreter and assistant director for his find until, engulfed with rage, he settled his contract and fled. Mayer wanted to please Stiller? They hated each other from the day they met—Stiller because he knew Mayer viewed his work with indifference, Mayer because of the coarse indignities Stiller inflicted upon his majesty. As for Garbo's salary; in 1925, any time an untried actress got more than \$300 a week the studio was really yearning for her. And nobody seems to remember how, after her arrival, Mayer kept Garbo in isolation in New York for three months trying unsuccessfully to force her to substitute a new contract for the Berlin agreement which would not hold up in American courts.

Sixteen years were to pass between the public execution of Lillian Gish and the bloodless exile of Greta Garbo. Hollywood producers were left with their babes and a backwash of old men stars, watching the lights go out in one picture house after another across the country.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stills:

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Torrent*, *Romance*, *The Merry Widow*, *The Wind*.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *The Last Hurrah*, *The Revenge of Frankenstein*.
WARNER BROTHERS for *What Lola Wants*.
RANK ORGANISATION for *Dracula*.
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NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *La Grande Illusion*, *La Règle du Jeu*, *Abraham Lincoln*, *Way Down East*, *Peter Ibbetson*, photographs of Greta Garbo and Louise Brooks.
ANGLO-AMALGAMATED DISTRIBUTORS for *The Day the World Ended*, *Invasion of the Hell Creatures*.
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TOHO FILMS for *Muhomatsu*, *the Rickshaw Man*.
NOUVELLES EDITIONS DE FILMS for *Les Amants*.
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FILM POLSKI for *The Ashes and the Diamond*.
MARSDEN FILM PRODUCTIONS for *The Immortal Land*.
RADIODIFFUSION TELEVISION FRANCAISE for stills from French television programmes.
FRANCE OBSERVATEUR for photographs of Jean Renoir and Roberto Rossellini.
CAHIERS DU CINEMA for *India 58*.
DAVID ROBINSON for photograph of Chaplin and Eisenstein.

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U.S.A.:	Albert Johnson	SCANDINAVIA:	Erik Ulrichsen
ITALY:	Robert Hawkins	SPAIN & PORTUGAL:	Francisco Aranda
FRANCE:	Louis Marcocelles	GERMANY:	Werner Zurbuch
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FILMS IN REVIEW, 31 Union Square, New York City 3

A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two or three stars

ANDY HARDY COMES HOME (M-G-M) Age has overtaken Andy Hardy, and he now conducts "man to man" conversations with his own son. It's all very simple and nostalgic, particularly in the excerpts from the films of Andy Hardy's youth. (Mickey Rooney, Patricia Breslin; director, Howard W. Koch.)

***AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS (United Artists)** Now well into its second year, this "show" remains a film like any other—but twice as long as most. Good performances by David Niven and Cantinflas and exotic guest appearances help pass the time. (Director, Michael Anderson. Cinestage, Eastman Colour.)

***BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE (Columbia)** Adaptation of John Van Druten's comedy of witchcraft in Manhattan, with Jack Lemmon, Elsa Lanchester and Hermione Gingold as the leading practitioners. Milder humour than the casting suggests. *Reviewed.* (James Stewart, Kim Novak; director, Richard Quine. Technicolor.)

***BIG COUNTRY, THE (United Artists)** Outsize (170 minute) Western, concerned with the adventures of tenderfoot Gregory Peck and the feud between rival patriarchs Charles Bickford and Burl Ives. Production values more in evidence than the authentic Western spirit. (Jean Simmons, Carroll Baker; director, William Wyler. Technirama, Technicolor.)

****CRANES ARE FLYING, THE (Curzon)** The "new look" in the Soviet cinema. A love story set against a wartime background is told with much romantic feeling (and some clichés); the camerawork is fantastic and the beautiful Tatiana Samoilova makes a perfect, tragic Russian heroine. (Nikolai Batalov; director, Mikhail Kalatozov.)

***EVA WANTS TO SLEEP (Contemporary)** Lively, if overlong, Polish comedy with farcical and even surrealist overtones and a deliciously naive heroine in Barbara Kwiatkowska. Its young director, Tadeusz Chmielewski, also takes a few sly slaps at Polish film conventions. (Tadeusz Mikulski.)

FLOODS OF FEAR (Rank) Escaped convict and innocent girl melodrama, set against a background of floods and attempted rape. Anne Heywood is drenched in various costumes, and the story sacrifices everything to violent action. (Howard Keel, Cyril Cusack; director, Charles Crichton.)

GIRLS AT SEA (A.B.-Pathé) Remake of the stage farce *The Middle Watch*, about girls smuggled aboard a warship. Jokes distinctly antiquated, but Michael Hordern has some triumphant moments as a bellicose admiral. (Guy Rolfe, Ronald Shiner; director, Gilbert Gunn. Technicolor.)

***GOHA (Contemporary)** A Tunisian love story told with sophistication and charm by Jacques Baratier, here making his feature debut. Ripe Agfacolor; equally colourful playing from a mainly indigenous cast. (Omar Cherif, Gabriel Jabbour.)

*****GRANDE ILLUSION, LA (Films de France)** Reissue of Renoir's pre-war pacifist study set among French and German officer class in World War one. It doesn't wear quite as well as expected, though the playing (Von Stroheim, Gabin, Fresnay) and the sentiments are still fine. A few missing scenes are back again in this version.

*****GREAT DICTATOR, THE (United Artists)** Reissue of a rare Chaplin in which he doubles the hysterical dictator and the passive little barber. Belonging very much to its time, and combining bitter satire with characteristically frantic comic episodes. (Paulette Goddard, Jack Oakie.)

HOME BEFORE DARK (Warners) Jean Simmons suffers rather splendidly through an elaborate psychological melodrama about a young woman whose emotional troubles bring on mental breakdown. It takes one back to the vintage years of Crawford and Davis. (Dan O'Herlihy, Rhonda Fleming; director, Mervyn LeRoy.)

HOUSEBOAT (Paramount) Bored socialite Sophia Loren rescues irascible widower Cary Grant from the irksome responsibilities of motherhood. Comedy bracing; sentiment cosy; child acting supportable. (Director, Melville Shavelson. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

***INN OF THE SIXTH HAPPINESS, THE (Fox)** Noble story of a woman missionary in China is here given the full treatment. The result is a bit too cosy for conviction, though Ingrid Bergman has some moving moments. Robert Donat makes his last, sad appearance. *Reviewed.* (Curt Jurgens; director, Mark Robson. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

I ONLY ARSKED (Columbia) TV's *The Army Game*, and most of its cast, transplanted to a desert setting. Predictable situations turn out to be inoffensively amusing, with two unexpectedly sharp satires on *Bridge on the River Kwai*. (Bernard Bresslaw, Michael Medwin, Alfie Bass; director, Montgomery Tully.)

I WAS MONTY'S DOUBLE (A.B.-Pathé) Based on the true story of a wartime hoax, this reconstruction is helped along by a genuine likeness between Monty and his double and some light-heartedly efficient playing. (John Mills, Cecil Parker, Clifton James; director, John Guillermin.)

****LAST HURRAH, THE (Columbia)** John Ford's affectionate study of the last campaign of a political boss. Seen through a sentimental haze, with real political issues carefully avoided, the film still largely works. (Spencer Tracy, Jeffrey Hunter.)

***LOVE IS MY PROFESSION (Miracle)** A middle-aged lawyer sets up an unreformed teddy-girl in an apartment; he sacrifices his career, she is murdered. Full of self-conscious "daring" (notably the girl, lover and maid *menage à trois*) and in its expert way very corrupt. (Brigitte Bardot, Jean Gabin, Edwige Feuillère; director, Claude Autant-Lara.)

MAN OF THE WEST (United Artists) Plenty of blood but not much action in a slow and stagey Western. Beautifully photographed by Ernest Haller and under- and overplayed by Gary Cooper and Lee J. Cobb respectively. (Julie London; director, Anthony Mann. CinemaScope, DeLuxe Colour.)

MARDI GRAS (Fox) Jerry Wald offers his four newest young stars in a rather tiring musical set in a Military Academy. Robert Wagner and Jeffrey Hunter, make brief guest appearances. (Pat Boone, Christine Carere, Tommy Sands, Gary Crosby; director, Edmund Goulding. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

ME AND THE COLONEL (Columbia) Adaptation of S. N. Behrman's wartime comedy about a malleable Jew and a stiff-necked Colonel escaping together from Paris in 1940. The joke is all in the clash of attitudes and the film hasn't quite enough style to make the most of it. (Danny Kaye, Curt Jurgens, Nicole Maurey; director, Peter Glenville.)

NOWHERE TO GO (M-G-M) The first film by Seth Holt, a former Ealing editor, is rather too flashy and derivative for its thriller plot to hold the interest. A good idea gone a little astray. *Reviewed.* (George Nader, Maggie Smith, Bernard Lee.)

OLD MAN AND THE SEA, THE (Warners) Hemingway's novel adapted with exemplary loyalty to the text, both in action and in readings from the book, but with a sad inability to translate its symbolic struggle so that it grips on the screen. *Reviewed.* (Spencer Tracy. Director, John Sturges. Warnercolor.)

RELUCTANT DEBUTANTE, THE (M-G-M) American raised debutante spurns a guardee for a democratic drummer who turns out also to be a duke. Rex Harrison and Kay Kendall bring a good deal of comedy technique to this old-world fantasy. (John Saxon, Sandra Dee; director, Vincente Minnelli. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)

REMARKABLE MR. PENNYPACKER, THE (Fox) Period farce featuring Clifton Webb as a bigamist with seventeen children. Made with a great deal more speed, it might have been tolerably funny as well as tolerably tasteless. (Dorothy McGuire, Charles Coburn; director, Henry Levin. CinemaScope. DeLuxe Colour.)

SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD, THE (Cinerama Productions) Large-screen world tour, taking in the sights of Greece, Japan, India, etc. Travel by Cinerama is losing its novelty value, and this instalment carries excess baggage in the form of Lowell Thomas's deadening commentary. (Various directors. Technicolor.)

SHERIFF OF FRACTURED JAW, THE (Fox) Spoof Western, with Kenneth More playing the irrepressibly typical Englishman who muddles his way through to success and Jayne Mansfield. Obvious jokes handled appropriately. (Robert Morley; director, Raoul Walsh. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

SOUTH PACIFIC (Fox) High, wide and generally unhandsome version of the stage success, stoddily directed by Joshua Logan. Happily the songs survive from a welter of eccentric colour effects and jungle decor. (Rossano Brazzi, Mitzl Gaynor, John Kerr. Todd-AO, Technicolor.)

STAIN ON THE SNOW (Miracle) A rotter (prostitute's son) in occupied France and his redemption *in extremis*. Very black melodrama, rather drawn out and clumsy in execution, but with good playing from Valentine Tessier and Daniel Gélin. (Director: Luis Saslavsky.)

***SUMMER WITH MONIKA (Mondial)** A 'middle-period' Ingmar Bergman film in which he continues his exploration of the trials of young love. Alternately tender and anti-romantic, this fills another gap in our gradual discovery of this artist's highly individual world. (Harriet Andersson, Lars Ekborg.)

tom thumb (M-G-M) Re-vamped Brothers Grimm, with a sugary love interest and high-powered dance routines from Russ Tamblyn. Pantomime size clowning from Peter Sellers and Terry-Thomas; excellent trick effects. (Jessie Matthews; director, George Pal. Technicolor.)

***WHAT LOLA WANTS (Warners)** Musical about a business man who sells his soul to the devil for a season as a baseball star. A hard, vigorous film, despite some of the baseball sentiment, with a striking new screen personality in Gwen Verdon. *Reviewed.* (Tab Hunter, Ray Walston; director, Stanley Donen. Technicolor.)

****WILD STRAWBERRIES (Contemporary)** Ingmar Bergman's Berlin prize-winner, a brilliantly constructed account of the twenty-four hours in which an ageing professor relives past experiences and discovers self-knowledge. *Reviewed.* (Victor Sjöström, Bibi Andersson.)

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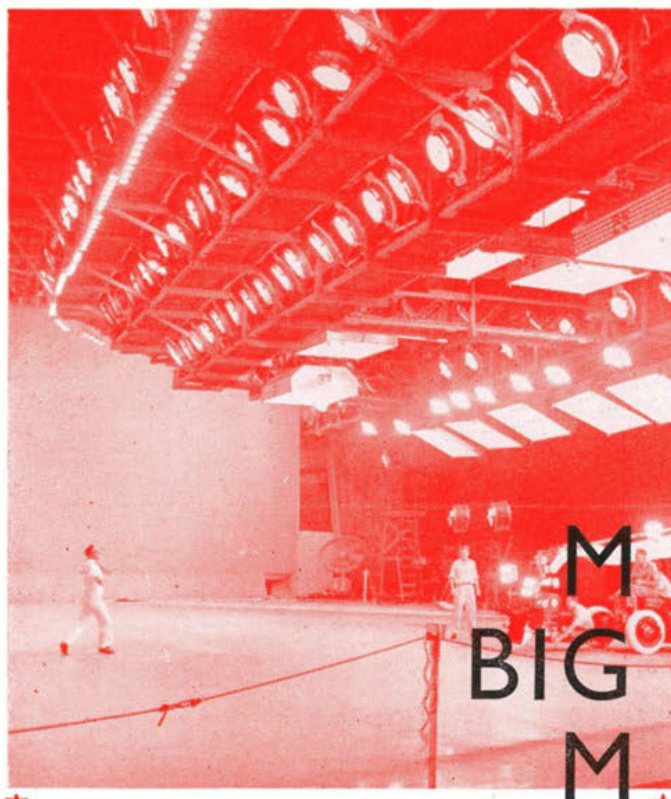
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One of the most fascinating phenomena in the post-war cinema has been the emergence of vital new talent in a number of European and Asian countries. There has been the amazing flowering of the Japanese cinema, one of whose finest achievements, Kurosawa's **SEVEN SAMURAI**, was shown at the Academy; the renaissance of the Swedish cinema, which is linked with the name of Ingmar Bergman (all of whose films, so far as they have been shown in this country—from **FRENZY** to **WILD STRAWBERRIES**—had their premiere at the Academy); and such outstanding films by new directors as Ray's **PATHER PANCHALI** and **THE UNVANQUISHED** from India, Laine's **THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER** from Finland, and Wajda's **KANAL** from Poland.

During its 1959 season, the Academy will present two films which were widely acclaimed when they were shown at the London Film Festival. The first, **GOHA**, is a delightfully vivid and colourful lyrical drama, and represents something of a scoop for the Academy: it is the first important film from the Arab world to be shown in this country. The second film, **EVE WANTS TO SLEEP**—a mordantly funny satirical comedy—confirms the impression left by **KANAL** and other recent Polish films, that the young Polish film industry is becoming one of the most courageous and imaginative in Europe.

At the same time we are not forgetting the established masters of the cinema. As a special act of homage, the Academy Cinema will shortly present Jean Renoir's unforgettable masterpiece, **LA GRANDE ILLUSION**. This film, which the Brussels Jury recently voted one of the twelve best films of all time, has just been re-edited by Renoir himself. It will be followed later in the season by several outstanding new French films.

*For information about our current programme, write for a copy of
the Academy Cinema Bulletin*

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